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2019

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
SANTA CRUZ

ART AND A PEOPLE

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

PHILOSOPHY

by

Steven Haug

September 2019

The Dissertation of Steven Haug
is approved:

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Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies

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2019

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Abbreviations Used for Works by Heidegger

(Translations occasionally modified)

- BT *Being and Time*. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson, trans. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962.
- BW *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings*. D. F. Krell, ed. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1997.
- FS *Four Seminars*. A. Mitchell and François Raffoul, trans. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995.
- FV “Vom Ursprung des Kunstwerks. Erste Ausarbeitung,” in *Heidegger Studies* 5 (1985) 5-22.
- GA5 *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 5: *Holzwege*. F.-W. von Herrmann, ed. Frankfurt: V. Klostermann, 1997.

- GA7 *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 7: *Vorträge und Aufsätze*. F.-W. von Herrmann, ed. Frankfurt: V. Klostermann, 2000.
- GA9 *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 9: *Wegmarken*. F.-W. von Herrmann, ed. Frankfurt: V. Klostermann, 1976.
- GA15 *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 15: *Seminare*. C. Ochwadt, ed. Frankfurt: V. Klostermann, 2000.
- GA16 *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 16: *Reden und andere Zeugnisse eines Lebensweges, 1910-1976*, H. Heidegger, ed., Frankfurt: V. Klostermann, 2000.
- GA39 *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 39: *Hölderlins Hymnen "Germanien" und "Der Rhein."* S. Ziegler, ed., Frankfurt: V. Klostermann, 1980.
- GA40 *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 40: *Einführung in die Metaphysik*. P. Jaeger, ed. Frankfurt: V. Klostermann, 1983.
- GA50 *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 50: *Nietzsches Metaphysics*. P. Jaeger, ed. Frankfurt: V. Klostermann, 1990.
- OBT *Off the Beaten Track*. J. Young and K. Haynes, eds. and trans. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- OWL *On the Way to Language*. P. D. Hertz, trans. New York: HarperCollins, 1982.
- HHGR *Hölderlin's Hymn "Germania" and "The Rhine"*. W. McNeill and J. Ireland, trans. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014.
- HHI *Hölderlin's Hymn "The Ister"*. W. McNeill and J. Davis, trans. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997.
- HR *The Heidegger Reader*. G. Figal, ed. J. Veith, trans. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000.
- IM *Introduction to Metaphysics*. G. Fried and R. Polt, trans. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000.

- IPTP *Introduction to Philosophy — Thinking and Poetizing*. P. J. Braunstein, trans. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2017.
- NI, NII *Nietzsche* (1936-1946). 2 vols, Pfullingen: Neske, 1961.
- Ni *Nietzsche Vol. 1. The Will to Power as Art*. David F. Krell, trans. New York: Harper & Row, 1979.
- NK *Notizen zu Klee / Notes on Klee*. In *Philosophy Today* 61:1 (2017), 7-17. Compiled and translated by María del Rosario Acosta López, Tobias Keiling, Ian Alexander Moore, and Yuliya Aleksandrovna Tsutserova.
- P1 *Ponderings II-VI: Black Notebooks 1931-1938*. R. Rojcewicz, trans. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016.
- P2 *Ponderings VII-XI: Black Notebooks 1938-1939*. R. Rojcewicz, trans. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2017.
- P3 *Ponderings XII-XV: Black Notebooks 1939-1941*. R. Rojcewicz, trans. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2017.
- PV *De l'origine de l'oeuvre d'art: Première version 1935*. ed. E. Marineau. Paris: Authentica, 1987.
- RM "Reciprocal Mirroring: Conversation between Shib'ichi Hisamatsu and Martin Heidegger on May 19, 1958." Carolyn Culbertson and Tobias Keiling, trans. in *Philosophy Today*, Online First: March 21, 2017.
- SZ *Sein und Zeit*. Tübingen: M. Niemeyer, 2006.

Abbreviations Used for Works by Kant

(Translations occasionally modified)

- KU *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. P. Guyer and E. Matthews, trans. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- L *Logic*. R. Hartman and W. Schwarz, trans. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1974.
- OH *On History*. L.W. Beck, ed. L. W. Beck, R. E. Anchor, E. L. Anchor, and E. L. Fackenheim, trans. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1963.
- PC *Philosophical Correspondence 1759-99*. Arnulf Zweig, ed. and trans. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1963.
- SPW *Selected Pre-Critical Writings and Correspondence with Beck*. G. B. Kerferd and D. E. Wolford, trans. New York: Barnes and Nobel, 1968.

Abbreviations Used for Works by Arendt

KPP *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*. R. Beiner, ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.

HC *The Human Condition*. 2nd edn. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018.

Abstract

Steven Haug

Art and a People

In this dissertation I argue for a reading of Heidegger's philosophy of art through which we come to understand Heidegger as thinking that great works of art found communities. In order to make this argument I first layout the debate among Heidegger scholars about the most important work of art in Heidegger's lecture "Origin of the Work of Art." Understanding what exactly Heidegger's philosophy of art is lies in part on distinguishing which of the artworks Heidegger discusses in his lecture "Origin of the Work of Art" he takes to be the most important work. Whichever work of art one takes Heidegger to be emphasizing will determine what one thinks the overall goal of the lecture is. Because of this, I dedicate a chapter to examining the strongest arguments in favor of each of the three main artworks in Heidegger's lecture. At the conclusion of this chapter I side with those who argue that the ancient Greek temple is the most important major work of art discussed by Heidegger in the lecture, but propose that the reason it is the most important is that it is the work of art which Heidegger understands to be able to found a community. The two chapters that follow provide further justification for this reading by examining Heidegger's discussions about the relation between the poets and the gods, distinguishing the concept 'world' from 'community,'

and addressing possible concerns about Heidegger's involvement with the Nazis. Toward the end of the dissertation I propose that many thinkers have developed theories about the relation between art and a people and highlight this theme by discussing Hannah Arendt's Kantian political philosophy, developed from Kant's work on aesthetics.

To my Mother, Father, and Sister,

for all of their love and support.

Acknowledgments

My warmest thanks to my chair, Dr. Abe Stone, and to Dr. Nico Orlandi for their advice and guidance. I am also indebted to Dr. Ted George who has supported me in my studies longer than anyone, and who continues to teach me how to think. Finally, I would to thank my fellow graduate students and the Department of Philosophy at the University of California, Santa Cruz.

Chapter 1

Introduction

With this dissertation I propose a possible reading of Heidegger's philosophy of art which argues that great works of art found communities. In addition to this main thesis, this dissertation exposes that the relation between art and people is a topic explored by a variety of philosophers. This theme of art and a people is cursorily exposed by looking to Hannah Arendt and Immanuel Kant.¹

This dissertation has three main goals: (1) adjudicate debates among contemporary Heidegger scholars by proposing and defending a reading in which Heidegger argues that great works of art found a community, (2) explain how reading

¹There are many thinkers to be looked at if this theme were to be fully fleshed out. Most notably, we can recognize this theme in Hegel's philosophy of art with his discussions about the role of art in the unfolding of world history, in Kant's writings on *sensus communis* in the third Critique, and in Gadamer's discussion of Kant in *Truth and Method*. We can even recognize it in Plato's *The Republic* where he expresses his concern that works of art may be detrimental to a just society. Because it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to explore this theme throughout these several thinkers, I have limited the discussion.

Heidegger in the way proposed gives us a consistent and charitable way of understanding Heidegger's philosophy of art, and (3) explain how the Kantian political philosophy that Hannah Arendt develops based on Kant's aesthetics avoids the problems of Kant's aesthetics, which make his philosophy vulnerable to critiques of 'situatedness.'

In order to achieve these three goals, the dissertation is divided into four main chapters, plus an introductory chapter (this introduction will be considered the first of the five total chapters in order to remain consistent with the organization of the table of contents). The second chapter, titled "The Artworks in Heidegger's 'Origin of the Work of Art,'" addresses one of the most important and popular discussions in contemporary Heidegger scholarship. Understanding what exactly Heidegger's philosophy of art is lies in part on distinguishing which of the artworks Heidegger discusses in his lecture "Origin of the Work of Art" he takes to be the most important work. Whichever work of art one takes Heidegger to be emphasizing will determine what one thinks the overall goal of the lecture is. Because of this, I dedicate a chapter to examining the strongest arguments in favor of each of the three main artworks in Heidegger's lecture.

This examination in itself helps us to understand the merits of each of the works of art, but ultimately, I side with those scholars who argue that, for Heidegger's project, the ancient Greek temple is the most important work of art discussed in

“Origin of the Work of Art.” However, I argue that while these scholars arrive at the correct conclusion with regards to the most important work of art in the lecture, they misdiagnose why this work of art is the most important. I agree with most scholars on the idea that, for Heidegger, works of art disclose truth. I differ from these scholars with regards to the particular truth that is disclosed by certain works of art, particularly the ancient Greek temple. I argue that it is Heidegger’s position that the ancient Greek temple discloses the truth of the ancient Greek community, and that what makes works like the Greek temple so important is that it — through its disclosing the truth of the community — is a condition for the founding of the community.

To further establish the claim that I put forth in the second chapter, the third chapter, titled “Community in Heidegger’s Philosophy of Art,” explains the distinction between *world* and *community* in Heidegger’s writings (a distinction that is conflated by many contemporary scholars). This distinction helps establish what exactly Heidegger means when he talks about community. Additionally, in this chapter I detail how it is that works of art found communities, according to Heidegger, by looking to his appropriation of Hölderlin’s ideas about the gods and the artist’s position between the gods and the mortals. As I demonstrate, and as others have also argued, when Heidegger uses the term ‘gods,’ he is often using the term to mean something similar to (if not as a synonym for) a nebulous sense

of community, or a community that has yet to be founded.²

Wrapping up the third chapter is a discussion about the relation between nationalism and Heidegger's philosophy of art. Since the publication of the *Black Notebooks*,³ that Heidegger was involved with the Nazi party is no longer debatable. The reading of Heidegger that I propose, which highlights Heidegger's understanding of works of art as being able to found communities, brings to light questions about the relation between Heidegger's ideas about nationalism and his philosophy of art. I argue that there is evidence that nationalism influenced Heidegger's philosophy of art, but that the philosophy of art does not require a nationalistic ideology in order for it to be consistent or fruitful. To demonstrate this claim, I look to the possibility of understanding communities in a way which does not delineate them nationalistically, and I look to contemporary works of art which could be said to found communities.

After examining the importance of the proposed reading of Heidegger, and fleshing out his philosophy of art in general, the dissertation turns toward the goal of exposing a theme of discussions about the relation between art and people. The fourth chapter, titled "Heidegger's and Arendt's Critique of Modernity," looks to the idea that modernity is characterized by a lack of togetherness. I argue

²Julian Young argues that for a synonymous relation. See Julian Young, *Heidegger's Philosophy of Art*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, 73.

³See P1, P2, and P3.

that both Arendt and Heidegger come to this diagnosis of modernity despite their varied approaches. This chapter continues the discussion about Heidegger developed in the earlier chapters by explaining some of Heidegger's thoughts on the differences between the Greeks and those of us living in modernity.

Similarly, Hannah Arendt argues that modernity lacks togetherness. She too appeals to the Greeks in making this argument and proposes that the Greeks distinguished between public and private life in such a way that allowed for togetherness. In modernity, however, this distinction has been dissolved and in its place we find what she calls "society." Unlike lives organized around the public/private distinction, a social life is not conducive to togetherness.

Both Heidegger and Arendt diagnosis modernity as lacking togetherness and look to the ancient Greeks as exemplars of a people who did not lack togetherness. Their approaches vary insofar as Heidegger's critique is closely tied to his philosophy of art, where as Arendt's is markedly a political philosophy approach.

In the final chapter of this dissertation, titled "Arendt's Kantian Political Philosophy," we gain insight into the relation between Arendt's political philosophy and aesthetics. While the fourth chapter discussed similarities between Heidegger's and Arendt's critique of modernity it left out the 'art' side of Arendt's ideas about art and a people. This fifth chapter seeks to explain the political philosophy Arendt develops from the inspiration of Kant's aesthetics.

Arendt takes Kant's philosophy of art as a model for politics. Particularly, she is interested in Kant's idea that we ought to approach art disinterestedly, and she proposes that we should take the same approach to politics. In this final chapter of the dissertation I detail Kant's aesthetics to the extent necessary for Arendt's project. I then explain one of the most forceful arguments against Kant's aesthetics, namely the argument from 'situatedness.' This argument, popular in feminist philosophy of art, argues that Kant's disinterested approach ignores situatedness, which is, according to the critics, the fact that all judgments are made from the position of our particular social situation.

A worry that one ought to have when looking to Arendt's proposition (that we should approach politics via a disinterested approach like the one proposed by Kant) is that the political philosophy that is developed will be subject to the same criticism that was leveled against the aesthetic philosophy it is based on. However, as I argue in this chapter, the Kantian political philosophy developed by Arendt avoids this critique by deviating from Kant insofar as she argues for a *general* spectator and not a *universal* spectator. The general spectator does not try to stand over and above their situatedness. Rather, the spectator entertains the situations of others in an attempt to understand that situation, and only after earnestly considering these positions are they in a position to make a judgment. Kant, when explaining how one ought to go about making a judgment of the

beautiful, argues that we cannot arrive at the correct judgment by way of a sort of survey through which we gather the opinions and positions of others. This, as he suggests, would only lead to a general judgment. What the aesthetician ought to do, according to Kant, is abstract themselves from all interests and attend only to the pleasure brought on by the art. The general spectator, on the other hand, does engage in a sort of survey, through which they come away with an understanding of the various positions. We could say the general spectator takes an extra-interested approach, entertaining not only their own interests, but all of the interests they can imagine. Insofar as the situatedness critique against Kant hinges on his appeal to universal disinterestedness, this critique cannot be carried over to the political philosophy Arendt models after Kant's aesthetics, because Arendt argues for a general position from which to make judgments, not a universal position.

Chapter 2

The Artworks in Heidegger's “Origin of the Work of Art”

(A version of this chapter is forthcoming in *International Philosophical Quarterly*, 2020)

Three works of art are discussed by Heidegger in his lecture “Origin of the Work of Art” — a painting of a pair of shoes by Vincent van Gogh, the poem “The Roman Fountain” by C. F. Meyer, and an ancient Greek temple at Paestum. Each work of art plays a different role in the lecture. Prioritizing one work above the others affects what is understood to be the overall project of the lecture. Because of this, we need to attend closely to the debate about the most important work of art in Heidegger’s “Origin of the Work of Art.”

This chapter examines the debate about the most important work of art in “Origin of the Work of Art” by looking at three positions. Each position proposes a different work as being the most important. I examine each of these positions independently, beginning with the arguments for why we ought to understand the Van Gogh as being the most important, then discussing an argument for the poem, and finally looking to arguments in favor of the ancient Greek temple.

In the final section of this chapter I highlight a disagreement between Hubert Dreyfus and Julian Young. Both explain the importance of the Greek temple in understanding Heidegger’s philosophy of art. This disagreement regards the question of whether works of art found or merely reflect a world. I argue that this disagreement misses the point of the Greek temple example. Also in this section I explain why the arguments for the other works of art in Heidegger’s lecture fall short of demonstrating that either the poem or the painting are more important to Heidegger’s project in the “Origin of the Work of Art” than the temple.

The aim of this chapter is to settle the debate about the most important work of art in Heidegger’s “Origin of the Work of Art” by arguing that Heidegger’s main point in the lecture is to demonstrate a work’s ability to found a community, and that the Greek temple is the only work (of the three major works discussed in the lecture) which achieves this. The other two works, while they are important, are important first and foremost insofar as they help us understand the community

founding ability of works such as the ancient Greek temple.

Because a discussion of Heidegger's philosophy of art in general is necessary if we are to understand the importance of any of the works of art in the lecture, part of the first section of this chapter will be dedicated to that.

2.1 Van Gogh's *A Pair of Shoes*

In addition to possibly being the most important work of art discussed by Heidegger in "Origin of the Work of Art," Van Gogh's, *A Pair of Shoes*, is also the most controversial.¹ Meyer Schapiro, a prominent art critic and theorist, critiques Heidegger's treatment of Van Gogh's *A Pair of Shoes* by famously arguing that the painting, as it is described by Heidegger, may not exist, or at the very least, a painting that matches Heidegger's description was not on display where Heidegger reported having seen the painting.² In "Origin of the Work of Art," Heidegger describes the shoes in Van Gogh's painting as follows:

From out of the dark opening of the well-worn insides of the shoes the toil of the worker's tread stares forth. In the crudely solid heaviness of the shoes accumulates the tenacity of the slow trudge through the far-stretching and ever-uniform furrows of the field swept by a raw wind. On the leather lies the dampness and richness of the soil. Under the

¹See Bernasconi's "The Greatness of the Work of Art" for a discussion about whether the Van Gogh even counts as great art for Heidegger.

²See Schapiro's "The Still Life as a Personal Object — A Note on Heidegger and Van Gogh (1968)," and "Further Notes on Heidegger and Van Gogh (1994)" for Schapiro's critique of Heidegger.

soles slides the loneliness of the field-path as evening falls. (OBT 14/GA5 19)

Curious as to which painting Heidegger has in mind, Schapiro writes to Heidegger. In his response, Heidegger reports that the Van Gogh he is discussing in the lecture was displayed at an exhibition in Amsterdam in 1930. Heidegger would have been nearly 80 when he was writing to Schapiro, and would have been recalling his visit to the exhibit 38 years after he had been there. The two most important criticisms leveled against Heidegger by Schapiro are (1) the work described by Heidegger does not match any of the paintings on display at the exhibit (Schapiro had cross referenced Heidegger's description of the painting with the paintings displayed in 1930), and (2) the shoes Van Gogh painted were his own, not the shoes of a peasant woman, as Heidegger assumes.

Since Schapiro launched his criticism, many have come to Heidegger's defense. These responses to Schapiro have sufficiently shown that Heidegger's project in "Origin of the Work of Art" is coherent, and that Schapiro largely misses the point of the lecture. Although, as Babette Babich points out, art historians understand Schapiro's claims to have conclusively discredited Heidegger's project in "Origin of the Work of Art."³

Because this section examines the proposal that the Van Gogh painting is the

³Babich, "From Van Gogh's Museum to to the Temple at Bassae: Heidegger's Truth of Art and Schapiro's Art History," 155.

most important work in the Heidegger's lecture, we need to discuss the responses to Schapiro's criticism. If Schapiro's criticisms had been successful, then it would be difficult to take Heidegger's discussion of Van Gogh seriously, let alone think that anything he has to say about the painting is worthwhile.

As Heidegger and Schapiro both know, Van Gogh had painted at least eight still lifes of shoes by the time Heidegger visited the exhibit. Figure 2.1 shows the painting Heidegger is generally understood to have seen at the Amsterdam exhibit. This is also usually taken to be the painting he is discussing in "Origin of the Work of Art."



Figure 2.1: Vincent Van Gogh, *A pair of shoes*, F 255, Paris 1886. Amsterdam, (Vincent van Gogh Foundation) Van Gogh Museum.

This painting displays the “dark openings of the well-worn insides of the shoes” — a description which Heidegger employs in his initial discussion of the Van Gogh. However, in this painting, we do not see the soles of the shoes, and Schapiro points this out.

Displayed along side this painting was another painting by Van Gogh, in which there are three pairs of shoes, one of which is turned over so as to expose the sole

of the shoe. Schapiro chalks up Heidegger's mention of the sole of the shoe as being inspired by this second painting (Figure 2.2).⁴



Figure 2.2: Vincent van Gogh, *Three Pairs of Shoes*, Paris, 1886, Courtesy of the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University Art Museums. Bequest from the Collection of Maurice Wertheim, Class of 1906.

From this, Schapiro concludes that Heidegger, when writing “Origin of the Work of Art,” is remembering an amalgamation of Van Gogh paintings he saw

⁴It is not clear why Schapiro thinks, given Heidegger's description, that the painting Heidegger had seen actually exposed the sole of a shoe. Heidegger does mention the soles of the shoes, but the phrase he uses, “Under the soles slides the loneliness of the field-path as evening falls,” does not even imply that the soles of the shoes are visible in the painting. Even Schapiro's slightly different translation of the same sentence, “Under the the soles there slides the loneliness of the field-paths as the evening declines,” (Shapiro, “The Still Life as a Personal Object — A Note on Heidegger and van Gogh (1968),” 136), does not get us any closer to thinking that the painting Heidegger is discussing presents the bottom of a shoe to the viewer.

during the exhibit. We can see why this might cause us to be suspicious of anything Heidegger has to say about the painting. If Heidegger does not have an actually existing work in mind, but a combination of paintings, then his claims do not refer to any actual painting.

Furthermore, the shoes in the painting are not the kind of shoes that would belong to a peasant farmer in the Netherlands.⁵ Leather shoes would rot in the damp soil. The farmers in the fields wore wooden clogs. Van Gogh painted such clogs several times also, but Heidegger is obviously not discussing any of those paintings. Schapiro makes it clear, through citing notes from Van Gogh's roommate during the time Van Gogh painted the shoes, that the shoes he used as a model were his own shoes.⁶ A man living in the city. Not a peasant farmer.⁷

Derrida, in his treatment of the Heidegger Schapiro debate, states that over his several readings of "Origin of the Work of Art" he continues to see the passage

⁵Thomson makes this point. *Heidegger, Art, and Postmodernity*, 117.

⁶Schapiro, "The Still Life as a Personal Object — A Note on Heidegger and Van Gogh (1968)," 140-41.

⁷There has been some discussion about the translation of *die Bäuerin*. Literally, the word translates to "the female farmer," but the translation most often used in "Origin of the Work of Art" is "peasant woman." Iain Thomson argues that "peasant woman" is not just classist but misleading." (Thomson, *Heidegger, Art, and Postmodernity*, 106.) However, it is important for Heidegger to invoke the image of a farmer who toils in the fields. As Thomson correctly states, the intimate relation to the earth, and the struggle required by a farmer who lacks the technological advantage of the industrial farmers, is what is disclosed by the painting. *Die Bäuerin* carries the connotation of a poor farmer — one who walks through the fields, rather than one who rides a tractor. Translating *die Bäuerin* as "peasant woman" rather than "the female farmer" allows the reader to understand the type of farming the woman is engaged in, and the type of farming is just as important, for Heidegger, as the farming itself.

about the Van Gogh painting as a “moment of pathetic collapse.”⁸ He thinks that Schapiro also detects this collapse — although, in a different way. But unlike Schapiro, Derrida does not begin his interrogation of “Origin of the Work of Art” with a question about attributing the shoes to a particular person. Derrida is skeptical of attributing ‘pairness’ to the the shoes in the painting, let alone who the shoes belong to.

Babich takes a similar approach when she pushes against Schapiro’s assumption that Van Gogh purchased the shoes for wearing, rather than as something to be painted. Babich thinks that we do not need to follow our questions all the way to “are the shoes even a pair,” as Derrida does. She argues that it is enough to stop at the question of whether Van Gogh bought the shoes for wearing or for painting.⁹

The letter written by Van Gogh’s roommate at first might seem to provide the biographical information Babich is looking for. After all, the letter recounts a conversation between Van Gogh and his roommate, during which Van Gogh tells the story of the travels he undertook in the shoes he was painting. But as Babich suggests, there is no good reason to think that *A Pair of Shoes* (Figure 2.1) is the painting that Van Gogh was working on while talking to his roommate.¹⁰ As we

⁸Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*, 262.

⁹Babich, “From Van Gogh’s Museum to the Temple at Bassae: Heidegger’s Truth of Art and Schapiro’s Art History,” 156.

¹⁰Babich, “From Van Gogh’s Museum to to the Temple at Bassae: Heidegger’s Truth of Art

have already mentioned, Van Gogh painted several paintings of shoes. Any one of them could be what the artist was working on at that time of his discussion with his roommate. Furthermore (and I add this to bolster Babich's point), Schapiro's argument that Heidegger is recalling not a single work by Van Gogh, but an amalgamation of paintings, comes about because he thinks that Heidegger had seen — and was, in part, recalling during his lecture — Van Gogh's *Three Pairs of Shoes* (Figure 2.2). This returns our attention to the fact that Van Gogh painted several *different* pairs of shoes. Are we to think that Van Gogh owned all of these shoes? Let alone that he purchased all of these shoes for wearing and not for painting.

While Babich and Derrida subvert the Schapiro/Heidegger debate in different ways, they both conclude that Schapiro's criticism misses the point of Heidegger's discussion of the Van Gogh painting, and that while Schapiro's claims are striking, provocative, and rigorous, they do not undermine the philosophical project at the heart of "Origin of the Work of Art." Babich makes it clear that we even ought to be skeptical of Schapiro's claim that the shoes in the painting were worn by Van Gogh, which provides an offense against Schapiro, rather than merely a defense on Heidegger's behalf.

Iain Thomson sets out to settle the debate in a way that could satisfy even

and Schapiro's Art History," 157.

those art historians who are sympathetic to Shapiro's position. It is important, for Thomson, that he put an end to the controversy surrounding Van Gogh's painting because he is a prominent supporter of Van Gogh's *A Pair of Shoes* being the most important work of art in "Origin of the Work of Art."

Thomson suggest that the controversy can be resolved if we attend closely to, and take seriously, Heidegger's phenomenology. By highlighting the phenomenological argument in "Origin of the Work of Art" Thomson not only demonstrates what exactly it is that Schapiro misses in Heidegger's discussion of Van Gogh, but he gives weight to Heidegger's assertion that what he has said about the painting is not mere projection into the work of art (which is another accusation Schapiro makes against Heidegger).¹¹

As Thomson lays is out, the phenomenological argument has four steps.¹² The first is the experience of the painting as an aesthetic object. This, I take it, is the way one usually engages with a work of art in a museum. We experience the work as being there for our viewing. Most of us, I would think, never get beyond this first step.

¹¹Heidegger sates, "To suppose that our description, as a subjective action, had first depicted [*ausgemalt*] everything thus and then projected into ['put into' *hineingelegt*] the painting would be the worst kind of self-delusion." (OBT 15/GA5 21) This is seemingly an offhand statement by Heidegger. There is very little that explicitly backs it up, if we do not pay close attention to the phenomenological argument that develops throughout the Heidegger's discussion of Van Gogh.

¹²These four steps can be found on page 112 of Thomson's *Heidegger, Art, and Postmodernity*.

Step two is attending to the *nothing*. Thomson correctly, and helpfully, demonstrates that ‘the nothing,’ for Heidegger, is a lesser developed version of what Heidegger, in “Origin of the Work of Art,” begins referring to as *earth*.¹³

Earth is that which continually resists coming forth. If we return our attention to Van Gogh’s *A Pair of Shoes* (Figure 2.1), we will see an example of what Heidegger means by ‘nothing’ rethought in terms of ‘earth.’

This second step of Thomson’s reading of Heidegger’s phenomenological argument requires that we attend to the nothing in the painting. ‘Nothing’ is that which surrounds the shoes. As Heidegger puts it, “There is nothing surrounding this pair of peasant shoes to which and within which they could belong; only undefined [indefinite, *unbestimmter*] space.” (OBT 14/GA5 18-9)

At first it may seem that I am making Heidegger’s words do more than he intended them to do. That I am reading ‘nothing,’ in the quoted sentence, as a term of art, when really all that Heidegger means is that the shoes are the only

¹³In stating that Heidegger’s ‘earth’ is a more developed version of ‘nothing,’ I mean only that ‘earth,’ as it is developed in “Origin of the Work of Art,” captures what Heidegger meant by “nothing itself nothings” [*das Nichts selbst nichtet*] as well as clears up the confusion raised by the phrase in 1929 lecture *Introduction to Metaphysics*. Commenting on the reception of *das Nichts selbst nichtet* by Carnap, Michael Friedman, in *A Parting of the Ways: Carnap, Cassirer, and Heidegger*, recounts that Carnap argued that Heidegger violated the logical form of the concept ‘nothing.’ (p. 11) Carnap, however, understands that this criticism would not affect Heidegger’s project because of the fundamental disagreement between the two about the philosophical certainty of logic. Carnap affirms this certainty, whereas Heidegger does not. Carnap is correct in his understanding of the stark difference between himself and Heidegger. Heidegger makes it clear that he does not want to be held to the standards of the philosophical certainty when he clarifies that what he is doing is *thinking*, rather than philosophy.

thing in the painting. One might suggest a reading which argues that all Heidegger is doing in this passage is describing to his audience the look of the painting. He wants them to know that the shoes are the only things in the painting. However, this sentence was taken from a section of the text where the reader is brought before gestalt shift after gestalt shift. The transitions between the paragraphs read, “but on the contrary,” “and yet,” and “but perhaps.” (OBT 14/GA5 18-9) When Heidegger first explains that there is nothing besides the shoes in the painting, we are expected to take it as a statement of the contents displayed. Then, there is a shift. Heidegger guides the reader through this shift by bringing to our attention what we see if we attend to the painting in a way beyond the mere aesthetic experience.

A pair of peasant shoes and nothing more. And yet. From out of the dark openings of the well-worn insides of the shoes the toil of the worker’s tread stares forth. (OBT 14/GA5 19)

The nothing is not a mere absence — it does something. It grounds the shoes. The indefinite space surrounding the shoes sets the shoes forth, insofar as the shoes appear to be resting on and against the surrounding space. At the same time this space envelops the shoes. Often people say that they see faces in the surrounding space, but these faces never come completely into view. The shapes in the background are always covered over, and this covering over threatens to do the same to the shoes. All of this is what we are meant to attend to during

the second step of the phenomenological argument. There is a tension between the shoes and the space, but the tension is not destructive. It causes the shoes to come forth.

Step three is the recognition of, and encounter with, this tension between *earth* and *world*. Both earth and world are terms of art for Heidegger. We have discussed ‘earth’ in some detail already, pointing out that it is a clarification and elaboration of what Heidegger meant in his earlier work by ‘nothing.’ Also, we have seen how Heidegger understands earth insofar as it is the indefinite space surrounding the shoes in the Van Gogh’s *A Pair of Shoes*. ‘World’ still requires more explanation.

World, for Heidegger, is that in which things become meaningful. For instance, the eagle (Aquila), was a prominent symbol for the ancient Romans. In the world of ancient Rome, the eagle becomes meaningful. The historical people, the Romans, imbued the symbol with meaning. To be clear, the eagle is not itself a world; the world of the Romans is what gave the eagle, as a symbol, its significances.

Heidegger often talks about the world of a “historical people.”¹⁴ (OBT 21, 26,

¹⁴Heidegger’s use of the word ‘historical’ can be misleading. He does not use this term to refer only to people who existed in the past. The ancient Greeks, as well as those of us presently living, are historical. Part of the project of *Being and Time* is to demonstrate that being historical is a constitutive feature of the human being. (BT §74) Our historicity results in our heritage influencing our decisions. Heidegger calls this occurrence *Wiederholung*, which we can understand as a sort of repetition. Our past is repeated in the present because of the influence or

38/GA5 28, 35, 50) And while a world can encompass an entire people, a world can also be much smaller. Ancient Greece and the Middle Ages constitute worlds, but as we learn from Heidegger's discussion of Van Gogh's painting, a world can also be the world of a person, or at least the world that a certain person dwells in, which includes fewer individuals than an epochal world. Speaking of the shoes (a piece of equipment), Heidegger writes, "This equipment belongs *to the earth* and finds protection in the *world* of the peasant woman." (OBT 14/GA5 19) From this, we can understand that worlds, for Heidegger, can exist within one another.¹⁵ The peasant woman's world exists simultaneously, and within, the world of modernity. Something such as a shovel becomes meaningful, becomes significant, in different ways depending on which world the item finds protection in.¹⁶ In the world of the peasant farmer, the shovel is meaningful as equipment. At the same time, a shovel can hang on a wall in a rustic coffeeshop and be meaningful as decor.

The tension [or strife, *Streit*] between earth and world (the tension we recognize in step three of the phenomenological argument), is not a destructive tension. While the two are "essentially different" (OBT 26/GA5 35), the strife between

heritage has on the decisions we make — whether we recognize it or not. We are also historical insofar as we exist between our past birth and future death. A historical people, for Heidegger, therefore means a people with a heritage.

¹⁵Dreyfus called these "modes" of worlds. Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World*, 90.

¹⁶I use the word protection, as Heidegger does [*behütet*], because things need to belong to a world if they are to be meaningful. Being a part of a world gives things their meaning, in the way meaning was bestowed upon the eagle because of its belonging to the world of the Romans. Outside of the world of the Romans, that is, when the eagle is no longer sheltered or protected by that world, the eagle loses its particular meaning.

earth and world is a productive struggle.

World is grounded on earth, and earth rises up through world. But the relation between world and earth never atrophies into the empty unity of opposites unconcerned with one another. In its resting upon earth the world strives to surmount it. As the self-opening it will tolerate nothing closed. As the sheltering and concealing, however, earth tends always to draw the world into itself and to keep it there. [...] The earth cannot do without the openness of world if it is to appear in the liberating surge of its self-closedness. World, on the other hand, cannot float away from the earth if [...] it is to ground itself on something decisive. (OBT 26-7/GA5 35-6)

The work of art sets up the strife between earth and world in such a way so that the strife persists as a strife. That is, earth and world do not dissolve one another, nor does one triumph over the other. We can see the persistence of the strife in the Van Gogh (Figure 2.1) with the images that nearly come into view, but not quite, as well as with the shoes, which stand out from the background, at the same time as the indefinite surrounding appears to encroach in on them.

By way of this productive strife between earth and world, which is setup by the work of art, truth happens. It is here, with his discussion of earth and world, that we find Heidegger's provocative assertion that works of art have a claim to truth — that a work is not a mere object of aesthetic appreciation.¹⁷

¹⁷Modern aesthetics does not approach art in a way that is receptive to the idea that art has a claim to truth. Aesthetics understands beauty to be its domain, and truth to belong to logic. (OBT 16/GA5 22) As Heidegger puts, for us today, aesthetics “belongs in the domain of the pastry chef.” (IM 140/GA40 140) In addition, modern aesthetics, and art theory, rely on the formed matter concept of *thing*, which Heidegger dismisses as a way of understanding works of art early in the lecture. (OBT 9-11/GA5 12-4) For more sustained discussions on Heidegger's rejection of aesthetics, see Thomson, *Heidegger, art, and Postmodernity*, and Young, *Heidegger's Philosophy of Art*.

Heidegger is not using truth as a synonym for correctness. Rather, Heidegger is appealing to an ancient Greek understanding of the word. In doing so, he is not asserting that we should give up the idea of truth as correctness — after all, we often do want to know whether statements correspond with reality. What Heidegger wants to do, through appealing to truth as *aletheia*, is bring to light a more primordial understanding of truth which underlies truth as correctness. Translated literally *aletheia* means something like uncover, or disclose. It is the uncovering of something that is covered over. It is a dis-covering.

The tension between earth and world, because it is a tension between covering over and uncovering, brings about this *aletheiac* truth. In the Van Gogh, the tension between earth and world reveals the truth of the peasant shoes. This does not mean that a particular pair of shoes is accurately represented, rather, what Heidegger means when he says, “In the work, a being, a pair of peasant shoes, comes to stand in the light of its being,” (OBT 16/GA5 21) is that we come to understand the kind of being the shoes are. We come to understand them as equipment.

When we encounter and recognize the tension between earth and world in the Van Gogh, not only do we learn what the shoes are in truth, we also learn of the nature of truth itself. We learn that truth is not fixed, that it is not a correspondence with reality (at least not at the level of *aletheia*), but that when

something comes to light, it does so through covering over.

While the example may not be able to do all of the philosophical heavy lifting we are asking of it, it can be helpful to think of truth as the beam of a flashlight in a dark room. The beam reveals something through bringing it into the light, but it does so at the expense of the things it leaves in the dark. To move the beam is to uncover something while simultaneously covering over that which it leaves in the dark. Through the Van Gogh we come to understand what the shoes are in truth. In addition, we come to understand the nature of truth itself.

After the recognition of the strife between earth and world, and coming to understand the truth of the shoes as equipment, as well as the nature of truth as *aletheia*, we move on to the fourth step in the phenomenological argument. Thomson argues that in this fourth step we come to see, for ourselves, what it is like to walk in the shoes. He explains by stating that, “to genuinely interpret any great work of art, ‘you yourself’ have to struggle to bring forth its hidden riches, just as the farmer must struggle with the earth to bring forth the bounty nurtured within it.”¹⁸ What Thomson is getting at with this fourth step is that the responsibility for authentically experiencing a work of art is on each of us individually. We cannot be merely told what the truth is that is disclosed by the Van Gogh; we have to encounter it ourselves if we are to understand it. This is why Heidegger, in

¹⁸Thomson, *Heidegger, Art, and Postmodernity*, 115.

“Origin of the Work of Art,” holds the reader’s hand through the different steps of the phenomenological experience with the Van Gogh.¹⁹ Heidegger attempts to show, rather than tell.

It is only at this fourth step that I find myself pausing in Thomson’s rendition of the phenomenological argument in “Origin of the Work of Art.” If we take the third step of the phenomenological argument seriously, we do not need the fourth step. By the end of the third step, we have already come to understand earth and world, and have encountered them in the work of art. Which in turn has brought us to the recognition of truth as *aletheia*. In addition, it is not clear that this step is part of Heidegger’s lecture.

Thomson cites Heidegger’s *Introduction to Metaphysics* when he argues for the fourth step.²⁰ While Heidegger does have important things to say about art and Van Gogh in IM, Schapiro never substantially addresses this text in his criticism of Heidegger.²¹ If we want “Origin of the Work of Art” to stand against Schapiro’s criticism, we ought to appeal to what is said in that text for the defense. If we require other texts of Heidegger’s, one could argue that: while we see, when we look to several of Heidegger’s writings, that Schapiro’s criticism is misguided,

¹⁹This happens especially at OBT 14/GA5 18-9.

²⁰Thomson, *Heidegger, Art, and Postmodernity*, 112-3.

²¹Schapiro does mention IM in an endnote, but this is only to point out that Heidegger repeatedly makes the mistake of referring to the shoes in the painting as peasant shoes. “The Still Life as a Personal Object — A Note on Heidegger and van Gogh (1968),” 142.

Schapiro is still correct in demonstrating the failure of “Origin of the Work of Art” insofar as that lecture is a standalone text.

Furthermore, Heidegger points out that the peasant farmer did not have explicit accesses to the truth that is revealed by the painting. Because she wears the shoes, and does not experience them in the painting, she knows the truth only implicitly. She experiences the shoes through using them, and when reliable equipment is used, it disappears into its usage in such a way that we do not pay any attention to the equipment. (OBT 13-4/GA5 18) If we were to imagine ourselves as a peasant farmer, why would we experience the shoes any differently? An implicit understanding of the truth that happens in the work of art would make it the case that we are not able to experience the work in the way required for it to be the most important work of art in “Origin of the Work of Art,” as Thomson argues it is.

That said, the phenomenological argument laid out by Thomson, without the fourth step, still successfully defends Heidegger’s project in “Origin of the Work of Art” against Schapiro’s criticisms. The first three steps take place within the lecture, and combined they bring us to the idea that truth happens in the work of art, which is where we need to get to if we are to get around Schapiro’s criticism. Once we make it clear that Heidegger is interested in truth as *aletheia*, and not truth as correctness, it becomes evident that Schapiro largely misses the point of

“Origin origin of the Work of Art.” By the third step of the phenomenological argument, we have already experienced, for ourselves, the strife between earth and world. We have learned what the shoes are in truth (equipment) as well as come to understand truth as *aletheia*.

It is because we come to learn about truth as *aletheia* through the Van Gogh that Thomson identifies it as the most important work of art in “Origin of the Work of Art.”

To fully understand Thomson’s argument for the importance of Van Gogh’s painting, we should note that Heidegger identifies the epoch that we are currently in as the modern epoch, specifically the late-modern epoch (modernity).²² Epochs are distinguished by an underlying current of meaning and intelligibility. In the late-modern epoch the world shows up to us as standing reserve, as a pile of resources to be used and used up. (BW 296-7/GA7 15-6) For Heidegger, what is problematic is not that we understand the world in this way, rather the problem lies in that we experience the world in this way at the expense of other ways. We fail to recognize the plurality of ways to understand the world.

Thomson points out that postmodernity will not be an *epoch* because postmodernity will constitute an era in which there will be no underlying narrative of the world. We will recognize the plurality of interpretations of the world.²³

²²In a later chapter I go into greater detail on Heidegger’s ideas about modernity.

²³Thomson argues that Heidegger’s mention of a “last God” demonstrates his position that

In order for postmodernity to come about, we (human beings) need to learn to understand the world in its plurality. Thomson argues that Van Gogh’s painting provides such an education, and is therefore the most important work of art in Heidegger’s “Origin of the Work of Art.” He suggests that Van Gogh, for Heidegger, is the painter’s painter, in the way Hölderlin is the poet’s poet.²⁴ What he means by this is that part of what Van Gogh does is teach us what painting can do, and what great art ought to do. Van Gogh’s *A Pair of Shoes* teaches us truth as *aletheia* — the constant concealing and uncovering that underlies all intelligibility. Thomson proposes that this education entails a learning how to *be* postmodern. In this way, the work of art becomes that which pushes us from the late-modern epoch into the postmodern era.²⁵

2.2 C.F. Meyer’s “The Roman Fountain”

Karen Gover, in her essay “The Overlooked Work of Art in ‘The Origin of the Work of Art,’” draws our attention to the fact that despite the number of articles and books written about Heidegger’s famous lecture on art, C.F. Meyer’s poem “The Roman Fountain” is continually overlooked.

the postmodern era will not be an epoch. *Heidegger, Art, and Postmodernity*, 9.

²⁴Thomson, *Heidegger, Art, and Postmodernity*, 105. Thomson appeals to Heidegger’s essay “Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry” (1936) when making this argument. This essay can be found in HR.

²⁵Thomson, *Heidegger, Art, and Postmodernity*, 105-6.

Its being overlooked is curious for several reasons, as Gover points out.²⁶ First, the poem is the only actual work of art in the lecture. There is no photograph of the Van Gogh in the printed lecture, nor do we have reason to think that Heidegger produced any such image for his audience when he gave the lecture. If he had, he would likely have been able to tell Schapiro exactly which painting he was talking about. There is likewise no picture of the Greek temple. The poem, however, is there in its entirety.

Furthermore, a fountain, the subject of the poem, is closely related to the theme of the lecture, *Ursprung* (origin). The word in German highlights the similarity between an origin and a fountain. Both are a bringing forth, a source.

By attending to the poem, Gover seeks to reveal what is really at stake in “Origin of the Work of Art,” namely: “how do we understand a work of art as a happening of truth, when the essence of truth still remains one of correspondence with correctness and representation?”²⁷ She suggests that while Heidegger pushes against the idea of truth as correctness, he never truly get away from it. Gover notices this tension and argues that this tension between the two kinds of truth is what is at stake in Heidegger’s lecture. Her position is that the poem is the work of art which addresses this tension. With this section, I explain this position.

In “Origin of the Work of Art,” the artworks are discussed in the following

²⁶Gover, “The Overlooked Work of Art in ‘The Origin of the Work of Art,’” 143-4.

²⁷Gover, “The Overlooked Work of Art in ‘The Origin of the Work of Art,’” 148.

order: Van Gogh's painting, Meyer's poem, then the Greek temple. When he moves to the Greek temple, Heidegger states that he wants us to take up a work of art which cannot be mistaken as a representational work of art.

We pose now the question about truth with the work in view. In order, however, to become more aware of what the question involves, it will be necessary to make the happening of truth in the work visible anew. For this attempt, let us choose a work that cannot be regarded as a work of representational art. (OBT 20/GA5 27)

In the paragraph which directly follows this quote, Heidegger begins his discussion of the temple. What Gover helpfully points out, and why she understands the central question of "Origin of the Work of Art" to be about the relation between truth as *aletheia* and truth as correctness, is that the temple is not a work that resists being identified as work of representational art. Heidegger has to tell his audience that "The work is not a portrait intended to make it easier to recognize what the god looks like." (OBT 21-2/GA5 29) Even with the Greek temple Heidegger cannot completely evade questions about what the work of art represents.

Heidegger continually disavows truth as correctness. Gover argues that if we take these disavows at face value, we miss the central point of the lecture. When we approach the poem seriously, her point becomes evident because Heidegger's treatment of the poem is the one place where he seems to embrace truth as

correctness.²⁸ It is this embrace which forces the question that Gover argues is at the center of the lecture; the question of the relation between the two truths.

We can see that Gover is correct about the poem being affirmed as a representational work of art when Heidegger's states: "the idea that the work is a copy seems to be confirmed in the best possible way by C. F. Meyer's poem 'The Roman Fountain.'" (OBT 17/GA5 22-3) It is clear that Heidegger thinks that the poem exemplifies a work of representational art. However, Heidegger also thinks, about the poem, that it "is neither a poetic depiction of an actual fountain nor the reproduction of the general essence of a Roman fountain."²⁹ (OBT 17/GA5 23) Given that Heidegger holds these two seemingly conflicting positions when it comes to the poem — that it is a representational work of art, and that it represents neither an actual fountain nor the general essence of a fountain — Gover raises the apt question: what is the poem a representation, or copy, of?

Her answer is that the poem represents *nothing*, in the way Heidegger uses the word. But at the same time, the poem places a being (the fountain) into that nothing.³⁰ Unlike the other works of art in Heidegger's lecture, this work is not merely described. It is in the lecture, and because of this, it is itself able to preform, unlike the absent works of art. This allows the work to do the things

²⁸Gover, "The Overlooked Work of Art in 'The Origin of the Work of Art,'" 144.

²⁹We will recall that Van Gogh's painting did present the general essence of the shoes, namely that shoes are equipment.

³⁰Gover, "The Overlooked Work of Art in 'The Origin of the Work of Art,'" 149, 151.

that Heidegger talks about the other works doing. The poem opens up a space, through representing *nothing*, and then places a being into that space. The work both appears at the same time as it speaks to that appearance and how it came about.

We learn from the poem, when we attend to it, that the fountain — in the flowing of the water from one basin to another — “each at once receives and gives,” [Und jeden nimmt und gibt zugleich] (OBT 17/GA5 23, sixth line of the poem). In this line, the second to the last in the poem, we hear an echo of the strife between earth and world. Truth as *aletheia* is a happening of truth. It is a covering over and uncovering. In the poem, we see this covering over and uncovering of the basins. The water fills a basin at the same time as water flows out of that basin. But through this covering over and uncovering, the fountain becomes the being it is. It would not be a working fountain without this covering over and uncovering by the water.

It is this relation which, I take it, Gover is speaking to when she argues that the poem represents *nothing*, at the same time as it brings a particular being into the strife it itself creates. This relation is the relation between truth as *aletheia* and truth as correctness. We come to understand this relation through the poem and because the question about the relation between the two types of truth is what is at the heart of Heidegger’s lecture — and the poem being the work which

best gets at this relation — the poem is the most important work of art in the lecture.

2.3 The Greek Temple

Julian Young, in his treatment of Heidegger’s “Origin of the Work of Art,” repeatedly dismisses Van Gogh’s *A Pair of Shoes* as not being of any real importance to the lecture. Indeed, Young calls Heidegger’s discussion of Van Gogh not only irrelevant to, but inconsistent with, the real thrust of the lecture.³¹ Young chalks up the passage about Van Gogh to be a result of Heidegger’s love of the artist’s work.

While he does discuss poems by Rilke and Hölderlin, he does not so much as mention the Meyer poem.

Young’s dismissal of Heidegger’s discussion of Van Gogh has the benefit of avoiding the Schapiro debate all together. If, as Young suggests, Van Gogh is largely irrelevant, and in fact contrary to the larger point of the lecture, then Young can accept Schapiro’s arguments and take them as further affirmation of his own criticism of the Van Gogh section in “Origin of the Work of Art.” He does not need to stage a defense against Schapiro the way Thomson does. With this

³¹Young, *Heidegger’s Philosophy of Art*, 5, 22.

section, I explain Young's and Dreyfus's arguments for the temple being the most important work of art in "Origin of the Work of Art."

Heidegger occasionally calls works of art "great works of art." At one point in "Origin of the Work of Art" he states that great works of art are the only works he is concerned with "here." (OBT 19/GA5 26) This statement comes after Heidegger's discussion of Van Gogh's painting and Meyer's poem, and right at the beginning of the discussion of the temple. We could take 'here' to refer to the lecture as a whole, but if Young is correct about what counts as a great work of art for Heidegger, it would be better to take the placement of the word seriously, as referring to the work of art Heidegger is discussing when he says "here." This reading would be consistent with Young's criteria for what counts as a great work of art for Heidegger.

According to Young, if a work is to be great, it must meet three criteria: (1) world must be brought out of inconspicuousness, (2) world must be made transparent to earth, (3) the work must gather together "an entire culture to bear witness to the numinous salience of world which happens in the work."³²

We can take these first two criteria, combined, to be a creation of strife between earth and world. As we can see, this strife, which bings about truth as *aletheia*, is important to Heidegger's philosophy of art regardless of which of the three works

³²Young, *Heidegger's Philosophy of Art*, 52.

one takes to be the most important. It is Young's third criteria that is not part of the arguments for the other two works of art. To explain this third criteria we can begin with Heidegger's idea that works of art can stop *working*.

A work of art requires preserves as well as creators. "Just as a work cannot be without being created, just as it stands in essential need of creators, so what is created cannot come into being without preservers." (OBT 40/GA5 54) Preservers are the people who participate in the work of art, and through this participation are affected by the work. Heidegger argues that "the temple first gives to things their look, and to men their outlook on themselves." (OBT 21/GA5 29) The first half of this quote relates to Young's first two criteria. For things to be given their look by a work of art, the work must reveal what the thing is in truth as *aletheia* through the strife between earth and world. The second half of the quote relates to his third criteria. A work makes expressly visible the world of the people. Those who are affected by the work in such a way are the preservers.

While the temple is the only example of a work that meets this condition that Heidegger dedicates a substantive discussion to, he also mentions that cathedrals served as great works of art the way the temple did.³³ The paths in a town curve

³³Heidegger's example is the Bamberg Cathedral. (OBT 20/GA5 26) His choice of this particular cathedral is interesting because Hitler, in February of 1926, held the Bamberg Conference in an attempt to unite the then fledgeling Nazi party. Given Heidegger's relation to the Nazis, it is unlikely that he did not have this conference in mind when he decided to choose the Bamberg Cathedral as an example of a work that can unite a people and show them who they are in truth.

the way they do because of the temple or cathedral. Cities revolve around the holy cite. Even today cathedrals and temples are often the reference point for moving within a city, they stretch above the other features in a skyline.

People preserve the temple or cathedral by organizing their daily life around the work, by participating in the work. Heidegger describes how the temple organized the lives of its preservers:

It is the temple work that first structures and simultaneously gathers around itself the unity of those paths and relations in which birth and death, disaster and blessing, victory and disgrace, endurance and decline acquire for the human being the shape of its destiny. (OBT 20-1/GA5 27-8)

The temple, a holy place, *works* as long as the preservers take seriously its holiness. However, we no longer experience the temple the way the ancient Greeks did. It is not the center of our daily lives. It is a relic. We understand it as a historical site, as a tourist destination. Because of this, the work no longer works. Heidegger calls this “world-decay” (OBT 20/GA5 26) and it happens when a work no longer stands in proper relation to the space it opens up. The temple opened up the world of the ancient Greeks. That realm is no longer open and the world to which the temple belonged has decayed. Now the temple is only a relic. While the temple still stands in the place it stood when it was the center of a holy precinct, the people who took that precinct as holy no longer exist.

From this discussion of artworks *working* and requiring preservers, we should

take the idea that great works of art need to gather a culture in such a way so that the members of that culture are made aware of their world, which is made expressly visible by the work of art. If this does not happen, then the work does not meet Young's third condition, and is therefore not a great work of art. Because the temple is the only work of art in Heidegger's lecture which makes expressly visible the world of an entire people, the temple is the most important work in "Origin of the Work of Art," according to Young.

Dreyfus uses 'style' to refer to what we have been calling 'world' and he defines style as "the way the everyday practices are coordinated."³⁴ The ancient Greek's who worshiped at the temple were different stylistically than the Germans who worshiped at the cathedral. Their daily lives were coordinated differently because the context of meaning which made up their worlds were very different. Our style determines how we view and understand things in the world, including ourself.

Fleshing out style this way allows the word to capture Heidegger's sentiment that great works of art give to things their look, and to people their outlook on themselves. At the same time it allows Dreyfus to appeal to examples outside of art to help the reader get clear on what Heidegger means when he talks about works of art making the world expressly visible.

While explaining style, Dreyfus gives us the examples of American style and

³⁴Dreyfus, "Heidegger's Ontology of Art," 408.

Japanese style. This sociological example is used by Dreyfus to argue that, given the way American babies are typically raised and the way Japanese babies are typically raised, those babies grow up embodying different styles.

In general American mothers situate the infant's body and respond to the infant's actions in such a way as to promote an active and aggressive style of behavior. Japanese mothers, in contrast, promote a greater passivity and sensitivity to harmony in the actions of their babies. The babies, of course, take up the style of nurturing to which they are exposed. It may at first seem puzzling that the baby successfully picks out precisely the gestures that embody the style of its culture as the ones to imitate, but, of course, such success is inevitable. Since all our gestures embody the style of our culture, the baby will pick up that pervasive style no matter what it imitates. Starting with a style, various practices will make sense and become dominant and others will either become subordinate or will be ignored altogether.³⁵

Moving from a discussion of style in general, to an explanation of the way works of art relate to style, Dreyfus states that works do three things: (1) Manifest a world, (2) Articulate a culture's understanding, and (3) reconfigure a culture's understanding.

When a work *manifests* a world, it makes a culture's style visible to those who view the artwork. This, Dreyfus argues, is what Van Gogh's painting does. It allows the viewer to understand the world of the peasant woman.³⁶ By so doing,

³⁵Dreyfus, "Heidegger's Ontology of Art," 408.

³⁶As I have argued earlier, in response to the fourth step in the phenomenological argument Thomson puts forward, what the painting really gets at is the shoes as equipment. This is what the shoes are in truth. The painting reveals the world of the peasant woman only insofar as world is put forth by the painting in the strife between earth and world. We do not want to push Heidegger into saying that when someone views the painting, they can understand what it is like to be a peasant woman. It is not clear from the text that Heidegger would want to make

the work shows the viewer the style which the peasant woman embodies.

When a work *articulates* a culture's understanding, it allows those who belong to the culture (whose style is made manifest by the work) to understand their own style. With (2), Dreyfus is pointing out Heidegger's insight that works of art articulate style in addition to manifesting it. This articulation allows the style to be understood by those who embody that style. This is something that works of art can do, that mere artifacts cannot. An archaeological excavation of an ancient city will deliver up items with which we can get an idea of the style of that group. The artifacts would *manifest* their style. However, since we merely use the artifacts of our daily lives, and do not study them as a scientist studies the artifacts from an archaeological dig, our artifacts do not show us our own style. The work glamorizes style in a way that an artifact does not, and by so doing enables those in the culture to come to understand their style.³⁷ Through this articulation, the people come to know what is worthwhile and what is not, and in this way the work shapes the destiny of a people. For example we can think of those whose style was articulated the cathedral to understand the crusades

this assertion, and furthermore, given that this assertion is so problematic, for obvious reasons, there is no reason to try to credit this idea to Heidegger. It is, I think, possible to read Dreyfus as not going so far as to say that we come to understand what it is like to be a peasant woman in any serious sense. He makes a point of how we can look to many different kinds of artifacts from another culture and get a sense of their style. We can understand this statement without thinking that Dreyfus means we understand what it is like to be a person from that culture (to "walk in their shoes") after viewing artifacts from that culture. Dreyfus, "Heidegger's Ontology of Art," 408.

³⁷Dreyfus, "Heidegger's Ontology of Art," 410.

as worthwhile, and those whose style was articulated by the temple understood sacrificing certain animals to appease the various gods as worthwhile.

To explain the articulation of style by the work of art, Dreyfus appeals to Kuhn's ideas about paradigms in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. In this text, Kuhn famously argues that what counts as good science is the science which is close to the paradigm under which science operates. When science operated under the paradigm of Newton's *Principia*, the work of a scientist was judged to be good work if it resembled Newton's work.³⁸ The paradigm showed us what was worthwhile science, and what was not. Scientific paradigms are articulated, rather than merely manifested, as is evident from one's ability to point at the exemplar of that paradigm (namely, Newton's work) even while living within that paradigm.

We can see how the temple can manifest a world — it makes visible the style of the ancient Greeks to those not part of the ancient Greek community, and how the work can articulate a culture's understanding — the temple held up to its preservers what was worthwhile and what was not. Now we turn to (3): how the temple reconfigures a culture's understanding.

Kuhn argues that the scientific paradigm can change, and that it in fact has a few times. Eventually the Newtonian paradigm was replaced by the einsteinian

³⁸Dreyfus, "Heidegger's Ontology of Art," 410.

paradigm. When such a change happens science is measured against a new exemplar, and because of this, what is understood as worthwhile science changes. Such an event constitutes a scientific revolution, after which science has a new grounding. Science, therefore, is reconfigured during a scientific revolution.

Looking now to Heidegger, we can understand great works of art to ground a style in the way scientific exemplars grounded scientific paradigms. And in the way a scientific revolution configures a new scientific paradigm, a great work of art reconfigures style.

2.4 Critique

In this final section, I first highlight a disagreement between Young and Dreyfus. This disagreement revolves around whether, for Heidegger, works of art found or merely reflect a world. I argue that this disagreement misses the point of the importance of the Greek temple.³⁹ Then I demonstrate how the Meyer poem and Van Gogh's painting fall short of the Greek temple in manner of importance in Heidegger's lecture.

Young argues that "the role of the artwork is not to create but rather to

³⁹There are other problems one may find with both Young's and Dreyfus' analysis of Heidegger's conception of world — especially with how they characterize the temporality of world coming into existence — but for the purposes of this dissertation we need only to argue that the debate misses the point.

‘make expressly visible’, to ‘thematize’ a world *which is already in existence*.”⁴⁰

This contrasts with Dreyfus’ position that, for Heidegger, works of art reconfigure a world (style). For Dreyfus, works of art not only articulate (make expressly visible) a world, they can also reconfigure a world in the way a scientific revolution reconfigures the scientific world.

To make his argument, Young appeals to Heidegger’s ideas about thematizing in *Being and Time*. Young points out that in *Being and Time* (BT 375/SZ 327) Heidegger states that human beings are always already in a world.⁴¹ This means that we exist within a web of intelligible human practices, and that only within the context of this web do our everyday goings-on have meaning. For example, only because our world has nails and boards in it are hammers intelligible as tools.

This world of average everydayness is know to us only implicitly. It is always in the background. (BT 99-100/SZ 71) What the artist is able to do is bring that inconspicuous world to our attention. Shoes are usually something we merely wear, but Van Gogh’s painting makes us explicitly aware of the shoes. In this way, the painting ‘thematizes,’ or as Dreyfus puts it, ‘glamorizes’ a world.

Young takes this idea from Heidegger’s 1927 writings and applies it to “Origin of the Work of Art,” written a decade later. It is by carrying these ideas from early Heidegger to late Heidegger that Young is able to make the argument that

⁴⁰Young, *Heidegger’s Philosophy of Art*, 33.

⁴¹Young, *Heidegger’s Philosophy of Art*, 32.

works of art thematize a world, and do not found a world.

While Young is correct in that Heidegger did not reject the earlier ideas about world,⁴² Heidegger does add to these ideas. Whereas *Being and Time* fleshed out the idea of ‘world,’ in “Origin of the Work of Art,” Heidegger adds the idea of ‘earth.’

The disagreement over whether or not world is merely made expressly visible, or can be reconfigured by the work of art, distracts from the relation between world and earth in works of art like the Greek temple. We learn from the discussion of the Van Gogh that the relation between earth and world is one of productive strife. The painting made expressly visible the world of the peasant woman and may have even reconfigured a world had the Van Gogh found preservers who were changed by the painting in the way a scientific revolution changes the science world. But in the painting the strife between world and earth made something besides the world of the peasant woman expressly visible, it revealed the nature of the shoes as equipment.

I suggest that temple works in a similar way. The world of the Greeks is made manifest and this world is in tension with earth. But something else comes about just as more than merely the world of the peasant woman came about from the painting.

⁴²Young, *Heidegger's Philosophy of Art*, 33.

A world determines the meaning of, and gives meaning to, the things in that world. Shoes are meaningful because we are the kinds of beings that walk around. The painting makes it expressly visible that shoes are worthwhile to the peasant woman insofar as the painting makes her world expressly visible.

What distinguishes the temple from the other works of art is that the truth disclosed through the strife between earth and world is not equipment, nor is it the relation between truth as correctness and truth as *aletheia* (as Gover argues is revealed in the strife between earth and world in the Meyer poem). Rather, what is disclosed by the strife between earth and world in the temple is *community*. Not merely the background of meaning that a group shares but the underlying values of an entire group of people.

Community being made visible is distinct from world being made visible because the world that is made visible by works of art, including the temple, is *my* world. I might share this world with other, in the same way the peasant woman shared the world of 'being a peasant farmer' with others, but what is made explicit is the nexus of implicit meaningful things of my everyday life. I come to understand the nexus of implicit meaning that makes up my world, but I do not at the same time come to understand my self as being in a community with others. When community is made expressly visible I come to understand myself in relation with others, and sharing commitments and values with those others.

Even in *Being and Time* Heidegger distinguishes between being-in-the-world and being alongside others.⁴³ We can continue to make sense of this distinction in “Origin of the Work of Art” if we understand the truth revealed by the strife present in the work of art to be something other than merely the world which is itself a part of the strife. While *world* is articulated by the temple, something other than that is produced by the strife between earth and world; in the same way that something other than the world of the peasant woman is present in Van Gogh’s painting, something other than world is present in the temple. This other thing that is present is “being alongside” others, or *community*.

The other works of art in “Origin of the Work of Art” give us the ability to come to understand the temple as being a work which, in the strife between earth and world, presents a community, which is a way of being with others in the world beyond a mere coming to understand the background world within which the things of our daily lives have meaning.

Van Gogh’s painting revealed to us that the strife between earth and world presented something other than merely the world which was present in the work of art. Meyer’s poem demonstrates truth as *aletheia* and its relation with truth as correctness. Once we arrive at the temple, Heidegger has given us the tools to understand that truth as *aletheia* is revealed in the strife between earth and

⁴³ “Dasein’s [the human being’s] totality of Being as care means: ahead-of-itself-already being-in (a world) as Being-alongside (entities encountered within-the world).” BT 375/SZ 327.

world. When the reader comes to Heidegger's discussion of the Greek temple, they are prepared to see the temple as revealing to the Greeks who they were as a people, as a community.

Thomson and Gover are right to attend so closely to the works in "Origin of the Work of Art" besides the temple, and they are both correct in their assessment of what the works of art do. However, once we come to understand the magnitude of the temple as revealing the truth of a particular community, the Van Gogh and Meyer's poem pale in comparison. Those works are important in the way Heidegger employs them in the lecture. Namely, as preparation for understanding the ancient Greek temple.

Chapter 3

Community in Heidegger's Philosophy of Art

In the previous chapter I argued that the real importance of the temple in Heidegger's lecture "Origin of the Work of Art" was to demonstrate the community disclosing ability of great works of art. With this chapter, I aim to do three things: (1) defend the reading of Heidegger proposed in the previous chapter by motivating the idea that Heidegger understands works of art to be able to found community, (2) explain how Heidegger thinks such a founding happens, and (3) expose the nationalistic roots of Heidegger's idea that art founds a community, and explain what can be salvaged of Heidegger's idea that art founds a community in light of the Nazi sentiments evident in his writings on the subject.

3.1 World and Community

I have suggested that other scholars overlook the importance of community in Heidegger's philosophy of art. When community is discussed in the scholarship, it is often conflated with the Heideggerian notion of world. We have seen already why, if we hope to have a consistent reading of how Heidegger understands works of art, we ought to distinguish world from community. We will recall from the previous chapter that in the works of art discussed by Heidegger there is a tension between earth and world, and that this tension discloses truth. Looking to the Van Gogh for example, we see that Heidegger explains that the world of the peasant woman is in a state of strife with the nothing (earth) that surrounds the pair of shoes. This strife discloses the shoes as equipment.

Carrying this idea of the working of a work of art from the Van Gogh to the Greek temple, I proposed that the tension consisted of the world of the ancient Greek people and earth, made up of the rocky valley (along with the creatures, weather, and everything else that encompassed the temple). This tension disclosed the ancient Greek community.

The temple does not disclose *world* exclusively in the tension between earth and world, just as the world of the peasant woman is not the only thing that is disclosed in the tension between the world of the peasant woman and earth. This tension produces something that is not merely one of the conflicting parts.

It is true that we come to see, through the Van Gogh, the world of the peasant woman, and that through the temple we come to see the world of the ancient Greeks, but the work of art discloses something more, in addition. For the Van Gogh, this is the nature of shoes as equipment; for the temple, this is the ancient Greek community.

With this section, I distinguish community from world and clarify what constitutes community for Heidegger, as well as the extent to which art is necessary for community to come about. I have made one argument for this distinction already, namely that something besides world and earth must come about from the strife between earth and world, and that when it comes to some works of art, this third thing is community. While this has made it clear that something other than world must come about from the work of art, more is needed in support of my position that this third thing is community.

At least within philosophy, Heidegger's introduction of the notion of world is more radical (when we consider the history of philosophy), than perhaps even the idea that works of art disclose community. The development of the notion of world is in fact one thing that makes *Being and Time* such an important book. *World* challenges the understanding of the mind put forth by Descartes — an understanding which colored philosophy for the next several hundred years. Descartes' dualism positioned the subject against the object, to the extent that

“I” was not even constituted by corporeality. The subject, a rational agent, gives to physical objects their meaning. This distinction was even carried through Kant, at least to some extent, as we can see from Kant’s division of his critical philosophy between pure reason and practical reason.

Heidegger challenges the subject/object distinction that persisted through the history of philosophy with his introduction of ‘world.’ World challenges this distinction because it constitutes a position in which things exist meaningfully only in the context of other things. Things need to be in relation if they are to be meaningful. A distinction between subject and object suggests that no such relation is necessary. For Plato, if we wish to understand what a thing is, the best way to do that is to abstract it from all of its particularities. For instance, if we want to know what a hammer is, we should imagine the perfect hammer (i.e. one that is perfectly balanced, will never rust, rot, or break, etc.). Once we understand it in its isolation, we understand what the hammer is in its essence.

As was mentioned in the previous chapter, Heidegger argues that thinking of a hammer in isolation will not reveal the essence of the hammer. In order for the hammer to be intelligible it must exist within the context of things that require hammering. If one wants to truly understand the hammer, they must become proficient enough at hammering so as to not notice the hammer in its use. The subject, the hammer, the nails, and the task make sense only in relation to one

another. This nexus of relations is what Heidegger calls ‘world.’

Similarly to the hammer, we cannot think the human being in isolation, as Descartes attempts to do with the *cogito*. There are constitutive features of the human being (that we care about things, that we are speaking beings, that we are finite, etc.) and we cannot think the human being outside of the context of these constitutive features. One of these constitutive features, discussed late in *Being and Time*, is being-with-others. In one section in particular, §74, Heidegger writes about being-with-others in a way that hints at the idea of community, which is not developed fully until later Heidegger. The following are excerpts from §74:

“As thrown, [Dasein] has been submitted to a ‘world’, and exists factically with Others.” (BT 435/SZ 383)

“But if fateful Dasein, as Being-in-the-world, exists essentially in Being-with Others, its historizing is a co-historizing and is determinative for it as *destiny* [*Geschick*].” (BT 436/SZ 384)

“In communicating and in struggling the power of destiny becomes free.”

(BT 436/SZ 384)¹

¹In the translation, the sentence begins with ‘Only,’ however, there is no word that could be translated as ‘only’ in the original text. “*In der Mitteilung und im Kampf wird die Macht des Geschickes erst frei.*”

Taking these sentences one at a time, the first affirms that people find themselves always already in a world with others. No one is ever born into a world alone. Even if you find yourself alone, you are still not without others, since the clothes you wear were made by others, as well as the chair you sit in, your haircut, your language, etc. Furthermore, being alone requires other people, if the idea is to even be comprehensible. Solitude is derivative of being in a world with others.

The second sentence asserts an implication of the first. If we are necessarily with others, then our being historical (see footnote 15, on page 21, for details on Heidegger's use of 'historical') necessarily is a being historical with others. This co-historicizing determines the destiny of a people — which is to say, the future of a people is constituted by the history of that people.

The third sentence should remind us of Heidegger's later writings which, as I have suggested, argue that through struggling — namely the struggling that occurs between earth and world in a great work of art — the truth of a community is disclosed.

In gesturing towards these sentences from *Being and Time*, I mean only to propose that a kernel of the idea that through a certain kind of struggling what a people *is* comes forth, or is set free, is evident even in early Heidegger, and that if we take these early remarks seriously, we can see them developed more fully in the later writings, particularly in Heidegger's position that works of art disclose

community.²

In addition to hints of the idea of a people resulting from a sort of struggle being evident in *Being and Time*, we should also notice the several words and phrases that Heidegger uses (usually interchangeably) as synonyms for community. He often writes about “a people” [*Volk*], “a historical people,” “heritage,” and “community” [*Gemeinschaft*]. At one point, in *Being and Time*, he even employs the word ‘generation’ (citing Wilhelm Dilthey’s concept of the word in “Über das Studium der Geschichte der Wissenschaften vom Menschen, der Gesellschaft und dem Staat”) as a synonym for community. (BT 436/SZ 385) In the sentence, “This is how we designate the historizing of the community [*Gemeinschaft*], of a people” (BT 436/SZ 384), it is clear that “a people” and “community” are used interchangeably by Heidegger. In this dissertation, I will use the word community most often. This is because the idea that Heidegger is getting at with the phrases “a people,” “a historical people,” “community,” “heritage,” and “generation,” is closest to what we mean when we use the word community today (at least by one of the ways we often use the word today).³

²That is not to say that things become simpler in Heidegger’s later writings. In deed, the opposite is closer to the truth. However, we have to attend to the later writing more seriously and can only gesture towards *Being and Time* because it is in the later writings that Heidegger discusses art and community in detail. These topics do appear in *Being and Time*, but any substantial conclusion drawn from that text about these topics would be more speculation than a careful reading.

³The phrase “a people,” or *Volk*, carries with it sentiments of Nazi propaganda and ideology. It is not my goal to hide this fact by using the word community in its place. In the final section of this chapter, I deal explicitly with the nationalistic undertones of Heidegger’s idea that art

Still, one might push against my use of the word community as an umbrella term for the handful of words and phrases just listed. It could be argued that while Heidegger does, many times, use these words interchangeably, they are not essentially interchangeable for Heidegger. The best way to make an argument of this sort is to try to draw a distinction between “community” and “a historical people,” citing that the latter invokes the past, whereas the former does not. However, this argument, I think, could only come about from a misunderstanding of what Heidegger means by “historical” when he uses the phrase “a historical people.” I address this possible confusion in a footnote in section 2.1 of the previous chapter, where I argue that being historical does not, for Heidegger, mean that the thing belongs necessarily to the past. Common use of the phrase “historical people” today does make us think of a group of people who lived before us. The Ancient Greeks are a historical people because their culture and people are a matter of history; it is in a history course that you would learn about the Greeks. While it is the case that the ancient Greeks counted as a historical people for Heidegger (or a community), this not because they existed before us. *We*, those of us presently living, are historical as well. As human beings, we exist between our birth and death and this finitude amounts to us being the kinds of beings who cannot but understand ourselves as “having been” as well as “going to be.” Each

founds a community.

of us, individually, have our history.

Thinking beyond the individual, Heidegger points out that we also exist historically with others, as is evident from Heidegger's claim that our historizing is a co-historizing. (BT 436/SZ 384) In the same way that we, individually, find ourselves always to exist at a point between our own birth and death — and only from this point do we determine the projection of our future — we also find ourselves to be existing within a certain community, and it is from within this community that we project ourselves forward. The organization of my life going forward and the decisions I make which determine its going forward are themselves determined by the community to which I find myself born into.⁴

The world, for Heidegger, does imbue our life with meaning. Only because we exist within a web of meaningful things, whose meaning depends on other things in the world, is everything from hammers and nails to Shakespeare's sonnets sensible. This nexus of meaningful items, however, is not enough to effect what is holy, great, and moral, among other things. Something over and above a codependent web of meaning is necessary in order for the robust and ethical way human beings understand events and other goings on. Our community determines the ethical coloring of what we see around us, and it is from this foundation that we make

⁴I use the word 'determine' because Heidegger does not think that our community is something we can radically break free from. We are "thrown" into it, and it is only from where we find ourselves thrown do we project ourselves futurally.

decisions about how we understand past events, and what we should do presently as well as in the future.⁵

As we continue through this section and show that Heidegger thinks that community is founded by works of art, and examine how he thinks this founding occurs, the distinction between world and community will become more and more evident. For now let us turn our attention specifically to the founding relation between art and community.

A community, argues Heidegger, is founded by great works of art. That is, great works of art originate, begin, or found, a community.⁶ “Origin of the Work of Art” does not, as one might think from the title alone, merely attempt to demonstrate what or where it is that works of art come from, rather it also illustrates that works of art are in fact the originators of communities. *Ursprung*, the

⁵While Heidegger does not explain this himself, we can see how this community/world distinction maps on nicely to the idea that some animals exist within a web of dependently meaningful things. Take a bird for instance. Twigs, for some birds, is building material, and we might say that this meaning of twigs for the birds only makes sense because they live in a world in which they lay eggs which need to be kept in nests. So one could say that birds have live in a world, in the Heideggerian sense. However, we would not want to say that birds make decisions of the past, present, and future in light of the community into which they were born. Birds do not have community. They cannot be historical, in the way human beings necessarily are. It follows from this that worlds can exist without community, which would make it the case that world and community are not identical. If they were identical, you could not have one without the other.

⁶Heidegger avoids giving a succinct definition of ‘founding,’ but he does state the following: “Founding’ is understood, here, in a threefold sense: as bestowing, as grounding, and as beginning. But it only becomes actual in preserving. Thus to each mode of founding there corresponds a mode of preserving. All we can do at present is to make this essential structure visible in a few strokes, and even that only to the extent that the earlier characterization of the essential nature of the work provides an initial clue.” (OBT 47/GA5 63)

German word we often translate as origin, literally translates to “primal leap,” and it is in this this sense that Heidegger uses the word. This is clear from the following passage:

Art allows truth to arise [*entspringen*]. Art arises as the founding preservation of the truth of beings in the work. To allow something to arise, to bring something into being from out of the essential source in the founding leap [*Sprung*] is what is meant by the word “origin [*Urprung*].” (OBT 49/GA5 65-6)

Art is an origin, that is, a leap, and this leap founds a people’s historical existence, which is to say, art founds a community. As Heidegger puts it in “Origin of the Work of Art,” “Whenever art happens, whenever, that is, there is a beginning, a thrust enters history and history either begins or starts over again.” (OBT 49/GA5 65)⁷

But how exactly does Heidegger expect that this leap happens? Understanding Heidegger’s idea that great works of art present, as opposed to (re)present, will give us at least partial insight into an answer to this question.

‘Present’ denotes a new happening, whereas ‘(re)present’ takes that which is

⁷History, here, does not designate a sequence of past events, rather history is that which organizes a people into a community. “History is the transporting of a people into its appointed task [*Aufgegebenes*] as the entry into it’s endowment [*Mitgegebenes*].” (OBT 49/GA5 65) By using the word history in this way, Heidegger is not completely separating it from our commonsense usage of the word. When we say “the history of the ancient Greeks,” we mean a collection of a sequence of events, i.e. the Peloponnesian wars, the death of Pericles, etc., but we also mean history as designating the time between the birth of the ancient Greek community as its death. Heidegger is distinguishing between these two, usually combined, uses of the word history, and stating that art begins history as understood in the latter sense, as beginning the era of the ancient Greeks. Art thrusts the ancient Greeks into history in such a way that we understand the ancient Greeks to have constituted an era rather than a mere tic on a historical time line.

already present and presents it again. Given this distinction, we can see that, for Heidegger, works of art do not deserve praise for their ability to merely present again something that is in the world. Saying something such as “the painted shoes look just like real shoes” does not in any way speak to the work insofar as it is a work of art.

Now, looking to presentation as opposed to (re)presentation, we first have to recognize that the presentation which the work of art brings about is not a mere bringing into being. The work of art does bring into being that which is revealed by the work of art (i.e. the essence of the community, the nature of equipment, etc.), but things produced by the craftsperson are also a bringing into being. For instance, the tool maker through her handicraft, brings the hammer into being. We do not want to say that the hammer is a work of art, even though it was brought forth into being and does not (re)present something already in the world. Heidegger needs to distinguish between the bringing forth of the art from the bringing forth of crafts.

This distinction is complicated by the fact that the ancient Greeks, the community from which Heidegger draws many of his examples of great works of art as well as using them as a pinnacle example of a community, did not distinguish between their crafts people and artists, nor did they distinguish, at least not by words, between handicrafts and works of art. Both craftspeople and artist were

called *technites* by the Greeks, and the items which both produces were called *techne*. (OBT 34/GA5 46) But even during the time of the Greeks, there was a difference in the way handicrafts and works of art related to their thingly character.⁸

All works of art have a thingly character to them. Paintings require canvas and pigment, sculpture needs its stone or bronze, dance requires bodies, and music requires its instruments. When we turn to the ancient Greek temple, a favorite example of a great work of art for Heidegger, we see that the stone is not used up, but rather, through its bearing and resting, becomes what it is to be stone. The temple, insofar as it is a work of art, presents the stone as stone, whereas when the craftsman produces their craft, for example, a hammer, the craft uses up the material. If the hammer is crafted well, the wood and metal it is constructed from disappears in its use. The temple causes the stone to come forth, it presents the stone of the temple. The hammer, on the other hand, requires the wood and metal to disappear in the balance of the tool and its usefulness as a piece of equipment. We are only brought into awareness of the woodiness and metallic feature of the hammer if we stop to examine it, or if it malfunctions. That is, its thingness only

⁸In "The Greatness of the Work of Art," Bernasconi argues that this lack of Greek concept for a work of art, distinct from the concept of handicraft, hampers Heidegger. He also points out that *techne* is the word associate with the second stage of the history of art (as Heidegger sketches the history in NI), rather than the first stage, before Plato and Aristotle, where Heidegger locates great art. (Bernasconi 101)

becomes present when it fails to be useful, when it fails to be a good hammer.

Thus far in this section, we have sought to demonstrate that world and community mean different things for Heidegger, and that it is a mistake to conflate the two. I have also explained Heidegger's understanding of the human being as a co-historical being, and that community, which is a constitutive feature of the human being, can be founded by a work of art. In addition, we briefly examined Heidegger's claim that works of art present, rather than (re)present, and how to make sense of this distinction in light of the vocabulary used by the ancient Greeks. Doing all of this has established that Heidegger understands works of art to found a community, and while understanding Heidegger's conception of works of art as presenting rather than (re)presenting has given us some insight into how it is that a work of art can found a community, more work is required in order to explain how it is that a work of art is able to found a community.

By way of addressing exactly how a work of art can unite a group of people in a way significant enough to found a community, Heidegger appeals to a fragment of Heraclitus' writings (cf. Heraclitus, Fragment 53 in Diels, *Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*), which he paraphrases as:

In that the linguistic work arises from the speech of the people, it does not talk about this battle. Rather, it transforms that speech so that now every essential [*wesentliche*] word fights the battle and puts up for decision what is holy and what unholy, what is great and what small, what is brave and what cowardly, what is noble and what fugitive,

what is master and what slave (OBT 22/GA5 29).⁹

Great works of art, like the linguistic work described here, have a *transformative* power over a people. It transforms what the people say in a way beyond just a change in mere words. The words do something; they distinguish between all that is listed in the quote. The work, because it is a great work of art, does not merely refer to the battle; rather, it transforms the very way people speak. It puts before them what is holy and what is unholy, what is brave, what is master, etc. It is from his understanding that works of art have this transformative power that Heidegger is lead to his idea that works of art found a community. He puts this point nearly poetically himself when he states: the temple gives “to men their outlook on themselves.” (OBT 21/GA5 29)

Shortly we will examine the role the gods play in the arts relation the origin of community. There, we will examine in more detail how the people, the community,

⁹The phrase in this quote, “puts up for decision,” might lead the reader to think that the linguistic work places a decision before a people and leaves the choice up to them. However, in the German this phrase is “zur Entscheidung stellt” (GA5 29), which has a more assertive tone than the translation conveys. The phrase should be read as “provides decision.” That is, the linguistic work is the thing that does the deciding and then bestows that decision upon the people. Heidegger makes this clear in *Introduction to Metaphysics* when he states, “With decision, history as such begins. In de-cision, and only in de-cision, is anything decided, even about the gods. [Accordingly, de-cision here does not mean the judgment and choice of human beings, but rather a division (*Scheidung*) in the aforementioned togetherness of Being, unconcealment, seeming and not-Being.]” (footnote p. 116). (Decision is hyphenated here because Heidegger emphasizes *Scheidung* in *Entscheidung*. Also, what is in brackets was in parenthesis in the 1953 edition.) There is a lot to unpack in this section from *Introduction to Metaphysics*, but for our purposes what we need to gather is that when Heidegger is talking about decision, he understands it to have historical significance, and that the decision is not made my humans.

are given their outlook on themselves via the great work of art. But already we can begin to understand the sentiment.

So far in our discussion of artworks founding communities, we have had only two examples, the ancient Greek temple and the linguistic work which Heidegger does not name. Because it will be helpful to bring to mind a work which may very well meet Heidegger's standard of a great work of art (even if he would not himself acknowledge that it does) let us consider the great work of art, the Statue of Liberty, on Liberty Island (a work not considered by Heidegger in any of his writings). We find inscribed on a bronze plaque on Liberty Island the words, "Give me your tired, your poor,/ Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,/ The wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,/ I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

This work of art tells us that the people who preserve this work of art, Americans, are those who accept onto their shores all those who do not have a home, and that they do so without regard to merit, wealth, or lineage. The work tells us who we are as a people, as a community. These words are embodied by the statue's guiding and welcoming pose.

There are reasons why Heidegger did not, and perhaps even would not, consider Statue of Liberty a work of art. At least one of these reasons is that the type of community Heidegger concerns himself with, with regards to his philosophy of

art, is the kind that is delineated nationalistically. For instance, the Greek community constituted the Greek polis. The Statue of Liberty, while it fits Heidegger's conception of a great work of art in other ways, is not relegated to a particular nation. What we are told by the statue is that anyone can become a member of the American community, and that what it is to be an American is not restricted by your place of birth. Insofar as Heidegger's philosophy of art is a consistent set of ideas, taking up the Statue of Liberty as an example is not problematic. Abandoning the idea that a community be delineated nationalistically also helps us avoid it being problematic that we call the Statue of Liberty an American work of art (which it is insofar as it founds the American community), even though it was created by someone born in France. America is "the land of liberty" and one need not be born on that literal land in order to understand that. As I will show in the following sections of this chapter, the nationalist undertones of Heidegger's philosophy of art are problematic for many reasons, but these are not essential to the idea that works of art can found communities, and, as I will show, we can salvage an important and coherent philosophy of art while leaving behind the nationalism that is evident in Heidegger's later writings.

Through its founding of a community, the work of art, in giving to the people their outlook on themselves, offers up decisions ready-made. It is byway of the statue's declaration about who we are as a community that our decisions with

regards to refugees and migrants is made without having even to appeal to reason, or a system of morality. In the same way that the linguistic work, the one from the quoted passage above, transformed the people's saying and distinguished between what is holy and unholy, the statue distinguished between what is right and what is wrong.

3.2 Community, Society, and Death

Before moving on to how it is that art is able to found community, there are two topics which need to be briefly covered before ending the discussion of Heidegger's idea that works of art can found communities. In this section we will see (1) that Heidegger does not think that it is only art which has the ability to found communities, and (2) the distinction Heidegger draws between community and society.

As we have seen, Heidegger does write about works of art founding a community. He also, at least once, speaks of something else as being sufficient for bringing about community. Heidegger argues that when soldiers in battle are faced with death, community comes about, and from this community, comradeship arises. As he puts it, "precisely death and the readiness for its sacrifice first of all creates in advance the space of that community out of which comradeship emerges." (HHGR 66/GA39 72)

What we can gather from this is insight into the question about to what extent the work of art is necessary or sufficient for the founding of a community. As we know from earlier in this chapter, works of art are sufficient for founding a community. Given that we have individuals (creators and preservers), the work of art is enough to found a community. The Greeks did not need the temple along with, say, the Olympics, to found the ancient Greek community. The temple itself was sufficient. However, we can take from Heidegger's comments about the soldiers on the battle field that Heidegger does not think that the work of art is necessary for the founding of community. Other things, at least this one other thing (death), is also sufficient for the founding of a community.

While there does seem to be some striking differences between the community of the ancient Greeks and the soldiers on the battlefield — for instance, the ancient Greek community, we would think, included more members and lasted longer than the community that came about on the field — one thing that is common to both communities is that something outside both the individuals themselves, and the community as such, was required in order for the community to come about. What we can conclude from this, and what Heidegger makes clear, is that community does not come about as a result of the mere taking up of reciprocal relations. We cannot get a group of people together and decide for ourselves, irrespective of the work of art, or some other external goings on, the guiding features of our group.

Heidegger reserves the term society for the mere taking up of reciprocal relations (HHGR 66/GA39 72). He does not argue the unimportance of society, rather he asserts that society must presuppose community. Because of the way the work of art always already distinguishes between values for me and for the peoples who heritage I share — in the way that the Greeks, when born into the ancient Greek community, had it decided for them what was holy and what was unholy — there is a priority to community. Anytime we undertake the taking up of reciprocal relations, we come to the table already having commitments, which we have because of the community we belong to. Community arises in advance, because each individual “is bound in advance to something that binds and determines every individual on exceeding them. Something must be manifest that is neither the individual taken alone nor community as such.” (HHGR 66/GA39 72) This thing which exists outside of the individual and the community as such, at the very least can be and has been, the work of art. The work determines the community, which is then always present when we undertake our dealings with society.

3.3 Community and the Gods

Having established that Heidegger argues that works of art have the ability to found a community, I now move on to explain how it is that he thinks this

happens.

Talk of “the gods” is prominent in Heidegger’s philosophy of art and, as I will show, the gods play an important role in artworks’ ability to found communities. This section is dedicated to understanding the place of gods in Heidegger’s philosophy of art. We will, however, restrict this discussion to the place of gods in Heidegger’s philosophy of art insofar as gods relate to community founding. To put the thesis of this section crudely, I propose that when Heidegger talks about gods, in connection to his philosophy of art, he is, at least much of the time, talking about community.

Heidegger’s discussions of the gods is often quite mysterious, and by relating Heidegger’s gods to community so closely I do not mean to reduce this mysteriousness. My claim is not one of equivalence.¹⁰ However, as we will see, Heidegger often explains the gods as being the essence of a people, or a sort of ethical understanding which held, unthinkingly but equally, among the members of a group. These features of the gods make it the case that, for Heidegger, coming to know the gods is a coming to recognize a community and to come to understand yourself as being a part of that community.

Heidegger does not develop his own notion of gods, rather he adopts Hölderlin’s

¹⁰Julian young, in *Heidegger’s Philosophy of Art* does argue that gods and community are equivalent (Young 73). This argument can be made, and may well be successful, but because I do not need strict equivalence for my argument, I will not argue for it. I only require what we might call a family resemblance between gods and community, which is a much weaker position.

use of the word. Hölderlin is particularly important to Heidegger's thinking in the later half of the philosopher's career. He understands Hölderlin to be the poet nearest to philosophy, at least since the Greeks Pindar and Sophocles. (IPTP 6/GA50 95) When we look to Heidegger's lectures on Hölderlin's poetry, we find Heidegger using the poet's words in developing his philosophy of art. Heidegger's task in his lectures on Hölderlin is to help the reader listen to the poet. The lectures are largely exegetical, and this is because Heidegger thinks of the poet as being between the mortals and the gods. Heidegger, because he is not a poet, does not have the privileged relationship to the gods that he sees the poets as having. Rather than explain the role of the gods himself, he takes up the role of a teacher and explains to the audience of the Hölderlin lectures what the poet attempts to convey in his own writings. The poets, from their privileged position, listen to the gods (who speak in hints) and pass along the gods' sayings to the people. (HR 127/GA4 45) So rather than tell us what the gods are himself, Heidegger listens to the poet and helps us learn what it is that poets are saying. In listening to the gods the poets pick up the subtle nuances of who the people are and then relays that message to the people through art, making what the community is accessible to the people and therefore founding that community.

My claim is not that Heidegger thinks that the artist merely reflects the community back to itself through the work of art. I am making the stronger claim

that, through such a reflection, the community becomes a community. That is, the community is founded by the work of art. The idea is that, there exists, prior to the work of art, a nebulous sense of the community, this nebulous sense is not able to be taken up by the people in a way that transforms them into a community. The work of art, through its reflecting, acts as a nucleus around which the people come to understand themselves a community, whether consciously or unconsciously, and it is only then that community as such comes about.

To bring us back to an earlier example in light of this understanding of how Heidegger perceives the poet, we could say that the artist who created the Statue of Liberty, Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi, understood the nebulous sense of the American community. When the artist created the Statue of Liberty, he took this understanding and communicated it to the public through his work of art. By creating the great work of art, the artist puts on display the essence of the community, and by so doing the public became community. The work of art transformed them in such a way so that they came to know who they were as a community, and it is when this understanding happens, which comes about through the work of art, that community is founded.

To gain clarity on this, let us turn to the text. Heidegger quotes a section from *Hyperion*, one of Hölderlin's hymns, which reads: "In art, the divine human being rejuvenates and recovers [*wiederholt*] himself. He wishes to feel himself,

and therefore he places his beauty before him. In this way the human being gave himself his gods.” (HHGR 22/GA39 20)

The divine human being mentioned in this quote refers to an artist, any artist who creates great works of art. They are divine because of their privileged place between the gods and the mortals. The quote establishes that the artist gives himself his gods, which already suggests to the reader that the word ‘gods’ does not refer to something like the Christian God, nor even to our modern conception of the Ancient Greek gods since we do not consider those gods to be the kinds of things that are given by the artist. In giving the gods to himself, the artist is creating the gods. He does this by placing his beauty before himself. How does this placing occur? Through the creation of a work of art. And this beauty is *his* beauty, because it is from the hints of an understanding of who he is as a historical person, as a member of a community, that he creates the art.

The artist is able to sense the essence of the community before that community has been founded. To make this “sense” of the essence of the community clear to himself and to others, the artist brings it into existence through the work of art. By so doing, the artist’s subtle understanding of the community becomes fleshed out, in a way similar to our having hints as to what we plan to write before we put pen to paper, but only once the words come into existence do we come to know what it was that we had in mind.

To continue with the Statue of Liberty example, we would say that Bartholdi was able to pick up on a subtle understanding of who the American people were, and by way of creating the work of art, he founded the community of those who welcome all to their shores. Through such a founding, that community came to know themselves as the people they were.

This example, however, cannot do all of the work we need it to. Heidegger's example of the ancient Greek temple is much better suited to help us understand the relation between community and gods.¹¹

Nothing is portrayed or represented by the Greek temple. (OBT 20/GA5 27)
That is, the temple does not represent the gods or anything else, nor does the temple portray the god or act as a referent. Rather, the temple *presents* the god. Or to put it another way, it is through the temple that the god becomes present. The space created by the work of art allows the god to manifest itself. In his explanation of the temple, Heidegger writes:

It is the temple work that first structures and simultaneously gathers around itself the unity of those paths and relations in which birth and death, disaster and blessing, victory and disgrace, endurance and decline acquire for the human being the shape of its destiny. The all-governing expanse of these open relations is the world of this historical people. From and within this expanse the people first returns to itself for the completion of its vocation [*Bestimmung*]. (OBT 20-1/GA5 27-8)

¹¹But this is only because we would never speak of the Statue of Liberty as presenting a god. Once we understand Heidegger's use of the word 'god,' however, it will make sense to say that the statue presents a god. In fact, we do say that the statue presents Lady Liberty, which would be a god understood in the way that Heidegger uses the word.

What we gather from this quote is the idea that the temple, through its presenting the god, gathers together all of the different paths and relations that make up a community. The god of the temple is worshiped when either birth or death come about, when disasters occur as well as when blessings are bestowed upon those to whom the temple belongs. All of these different aspects of human existence converge at the temple. The path of the Greeks' lives, through good times and bad, had the temple as a steadfast guide.

To further elucidate the idea that Heidegger often uses talk of the gods to mean something in line with the essence of community, it is helpful to separate Heidegger's use of the word 'gods' from our common understanding of the word as being related to religion. Heidegger makes it clear that it is his assessment of the ancient Greeks that they did not have something like what we would today consider a religion. He makes this explicitly clear when he states: "The Greeks had no 'religion' [...]" (IPTP 18/GA50 108) Heidegger of course acknowledges that the Greeks had gods, but if we are to allow Heidegger to be able to say that the Greeks had gods but no religion, at least one avenue available to us is understanding that when he uses the word 'gods,' Heidegger is saying something about community rather than something about the religion of the ancient Greeks.

By stating that the Greeks had no religion, Heidegger forces us to pay closer attention to what he understands the Greek gods to be. The statement, "the

Greeks had no religion” does not alone warrant us to conclude that Heidegger understands the gods to be the essence of community. However, when we attend to what Heidegger means by ‘gods’ and discover that he thinks the gods are something that the poet gives to himself by listening to hints from the gods and then placing those hints into his art, combined with the idea that when art happens history either begins or starts over again, it becomes evident that, for Heidegger, gods are related to community in a way such that we can confidently make the argument that when he uses the word gods he is often talking about community.

Much of this argument rests on the role of the poet. To bolster this argument the next section elucidates the role of poetry in relation to community as well as the distinction Heidegger draws between poetry and poesy.

3.4 Poetry, Language, and the Human Being

So far in this chapter we have gathered that, for Heidegger, the work of art founds a community, and we have seen how Heidegger thinks this founding occurs. With this section, I explain again, in summary form, some of the points already discussed and demonstrate how each of the parts (the gods, community, poets, human beings, etc.) fit together in Heidegger’s philosophy of art.

This section will begin with a brief discussion of the relation between art and truth (a topic covered in detail in the previous chapter). The notion that works of

art have a claim to truth is a necessary foot bridge in bringing us to the idea that works of art *name*, which will then lead us to a discussion of Heidegger's philosophy of language as it relates to art. A discussion on language is relevant to a chapter about Heidegger's philosophy of art and community because of the ontological priority of poetry to language. Understanding this ontological relationship in light of what we have gathered with regards to the topics of art and community in Heidegger's writings will demonstrate the importance of Heidegger's thoughts on art to his philosophy more generally.

Heidegger famously stated, "language is the house of Being." (BW 213) Given that he thinks this, as well as that poetry has an ontological priority to language, we can conclude that, for Heidegger, the work of art has an ontological priority to human existence. Before we get to this, I will make some remarks about Heidegger's distinction between poetry and poesy, as well as briefly explain the role of the poet in times when there are gods for the poet to receive hints from.

Heidegger preserves the word *poesy* to designate what we commonly call poetry. He does this because, in adopting Hölderlin's use of the word poetry, Heidegger uses the word poetry to include all poetic works of art, regardless of the medium of the given artwork. So, the Homeric epics as well as Hölderlin's hymns are poetic, as well as being examples of poesy, while the Greek temple would be poetic but not an instance of poesy.

A work of art for Heidegger is poetic when that work of art discloses truth. For some of the examples we have concerned ourselves with thus far, the truth that is disclosed by the work of art is the truth of what a community is. Because all art in its essence is poetry, “the arts of architecture, painting, sculpture, and music must be traced back to poesy.” (OBT 45/GA5 60) While all works of art that deserve to be called such have a claim to truth, given Heidegger’s conception of language, the work of poesy still has a privileged position among art forms. (OBT 45/GA5 60-1) It is privileged not in the sense that it is the best form of art, or that any truth is best disclosed by a work of poesy. Rather, poesy is privileged because, when we understand language to not merely be a tool for communication, but understand it to be that which names, we find that all works of art presuppose the linguistic work.¹² All works of art name beings in such a way as to bring those beings out of concealment and into being. To return to the Statue of Liberty example, through its naming, which occurs via the statue itself as well as the words on the plaque, what the community is comes into being, that is, the community is founded and through this founding the community is brought out of concealment and becomes the community that it is. Before the statue, there was an abstract or nebulous sense of what the community was, but once the statue was created it made explicit what the community is by way of its

¹²Heidegger also discusses the primacy of poesy among the arts at Ni164-5/Ni192-93

naming the community.

We should be able to begin to see the connections between the poets (i.e. the artists), the gods, and the community. The poets, with their ability to hear the hints with which the gods speak and create a work of art, bring a community into being. The work of art is an interpretation of the “voice of the people,” not an interpretation of a God as we think of it in the Christian sense. (HR 127/GA4 46) As we saw in the last section, the gods are closely related to community, and when the artist hears the hints from the gods, they are hearing the nebulous idea of what the community is. The poet then names the gods (HR 123/GA4 41) through the work of art, and this naming, because of the nature of naming and Heidegger’s understanding of language as being more than merely a tool for communicating and conveying information, brings into being from out of concealment that which is named. In the cases we have looked at we have seen that what was named was the community, and because it was the community which was named, community is what was brought into being; a community was founded.

Heidegger makes this point when he writes: “Poetry is the unconcealedness of what is. Actual language at any given moment is the happening of this saying, in which a people’s world history arises for it [...] In such saying, the concepts of a historical people’s nature, i.e., of its belonging to world history, are formed for the

folk, before it.” (OBT 46/GA5 61-2) With this quote Heidegger is asserting that poetry brings into existence (or founds) a community, with all that that entails. What arises is the community, and through this, what we might call a community’s values, also comes about. Returning to the Heraclitus passage referred to in a previous section, we will remember that the linguistic work decided for the ancient Greeks what was brave and what was cowardly. Given the distinction that Heidegger draws between society and community, we know that what comes about when the work of art names the community are all of that community’s values which precede any reciprocal, or societal, dealings.

Heidegger explains further what this community founding, by poetry, looks like when he states: “Poetry looks like a game and yet it is not. A game indeed brings people together, but in such a manner that each forgets himself. In poetry, conversely, humans are gathered into the ground of their existence” (HR 126/GA4 45). Through the work of art, the people are brought together in such a way so as to become who they are as a people. What happens through the work of art is the converse of forgetfulness — the community comes to understand what it is as a community.

We have learned that for Heidegger, in times when there are gods to receive hints from, the poet’s task is to listen for the hints and then create a work of art which transforms the people in such a way as to create a community. The

poet intercepts the hints from the gods and passes these hints on in such a way that they can be understood by the people, i.e., by creating works of art. Given that all works of art are poetic, when we understand Heidegger's conception of language, we can gather that the path of ontological priority among the things we are here discussing begins with poetry, then language, and finally leads to human existence [*Dasein*]. When the gods are named by the poets, the human being's existence becomes meaningful in a way that it was not before the work of art was created.

We will remember that Heraclitus, in the quote about the linguistic work, told us that the work of art transformed the speech of the people and decided for them what was great and what was small, etc. By deciding this, the work made things meaningful in ways that they were not before the work was created. When things in our lives gain meaning, we become grounded in that life. When life is organized by what is great and what is small, what is holy and what is unholy, etc., we become grounded in our existence. Heidegger states that poetry, in its essence, is a founding. (HR 127/GA4 45) Founding is used interchangeably by Heidegger with "a firm grounding." The statement that poetry in its essence is a founding is not in contrast with the earlier statement that the essence of poetry is truth. Poetry discloses truth, which can also be stated as "poetry founds truth." Poetry, in disclosing the truth of what a community is, at the same time founds

that community. The work of art discloses to the people what the community is and in so doing, the work of art founds the community. In his own words, Heidegger explains the path from the act of naming the gods to the grounding of human existence in this passage:

Through the gods being named, and the essence of things coming to expression so that they first shine forth, humans' Dasein is brought into a firm relation and placed on a ground. The poet's saying is not only a founding in the sense of free bestowal, but at the same time in the sense of the firm grounding of human existence in its ground. (HR 124/GA4 41-2)

We can by now see that by poetry, Heidegger means the naming of the gods and, in turn, the naming of the community. We have also seen that such a naming is a founding. Heidegger concludes this explicitly when he states: "we now understand poetry as the founding of naming of the gods and of the essence of things." (HR 124/GA4 42) What remains to be clarified is how it is that Heidegger thinks that poetry is ontologically prior to language and to human existence. We know that Heidegger thinks this because of statements such as, "Human existence is 'poetic' in its ground," (HR 124/GA4 42) and "poetry is the primordial language of a historical people." (HR 125/GA4 43)

One might assume that human existence is a condition for the possibility of language, and language to be a condition for the possibility for poetry. Heidegger is turning this linear relation on its head. By turning this relation on its head, we get a picture of human existence in which human beings are the kinds of beings

that are necessarily with others. This is because, through poetry's founding a community human beings finally become the kinds of beings they are, i.e. they become *historical* beings.

Heidegger briefly discusses people as being communal beings in *Being and Time*, but it is not until Heidegger develops his philosophy of art, and the idea of art's relationship to community, that we get the details of how it is that the human being is necessarily a communal being. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger arrives at the understanding of the human being as being the kind of being who exist necessarily with others. In §74 he discusses human beings as guided by a shared destiny, and that this way of being with others constitutes community [*Gemeinschaft*]. (SZ 384) The question of how such a community comes about is left open until Heidegger turns his thought to Hölderlin and works of art.

In order to exist as human beings, we must exist communally. This is not because human beings need resources that they cannot get themselves, nor does this statement hint to any other biological or economic reasons for our living communally. Any sort of economic communal living would constitute society, rather than community, and we have mentioned already that society presupposes community. The living communally that is required for human beings to exist as human beings is achieved through the work of art founding the community. Because art brings about community, and humans only exist as human beings

when they exist communally, we can see why Heidegger concludes that poetry is ontologically prior to human existence.

Still, we need to situate language between art and existence, ontologically. After all, it seems difficult to understand why, let alone how, it is that art must exist prior to language. However, the relationship between art, language, and existence becomes clear once we realize that Heidegger understands the essence of language to be conversation.¹³

Conversation requires, of course, more than a singular individual. And while we may be able to gather together several people and have them talk to one another, unless they have a communal relation and not merely a societal relation, their discussion will only be idle talk [*Gerede*], or gossip.¹⁴ Once the work of art founds the community, true conversation, language in its very essence, can occur.

The work of art founds the community, which in turn allows language to come about in its very essence, only after which do human beings come to exist as such. This path from the work of art to human existence helps to shed light on Heidegger's famous statements, "poetically man dwells," and "language is the house of Being." (BW 213/GA9 333, BW 239/GA9 361) By shedding this light, the idea that works of art found a community helps us gain clarity on Heidegger's

¹³"Human Being is grounded in language; but this first properly occurs in *conversation*." (HR 121/GA4 38)

¹⁴*Gerede* is discussed in *Being and Time* §35. (SZ 167)

works as a whole, as well as in answering the question of community that is opened in *Being and Time* but remained unanswered until the turn to thinking about the work of art.

3.5 Nationalism in Heidegger's Philosophy of Art

At one point, even if it was disingenuous, there was a debate about Heidegger's association with the Nazis. Now, especially after the publication of some of the *Black Notebooks*,¹⁵ it is not a question that Heidegger was involved with the Nazi Party, and that he shared many of their bigoted beliefs.

Because our discussion of art and community in Heidegger's philosophy of art focuses primarily on Heidegger's later writings — where his nationalistic ideology is most explicit — an examination of the extent to which his talk of community is tainted – or even undermined – by nationalism is required.

With this section, I explore the nationalistic ideology in Heidegger's philosophy of art. Heidegger often uses the same rhetorical devices and phrases as the Nazis. While it is certainly the case that many of these rhetorical devices and phrases could be understood as promoting either a nationalistic sentiment or patriotism and innocent love for Germany, given what we now know about Heidegger's po-

¹⁵See P1, P2, and P3. Originally published in German as *Überlegungen II–VI (Schwarze Hefte 1931–1938)*; *Überlegungen VII–XI (Schwarze Hefte 1938/39)*; *Überlegungen XII–XV (Schwarze Hefte 1939–1941)*; *Gesamtausgabe 94–96*, ed. Peter Trawny, (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 2014).

litical beliefs, it would be unreasonable to assume that the similarities between his writings and Nazi rhetoric are mere similarities, and that Heidegger intend to use theses words and phrases without invoking their nationalistic connotations. After all, “Origin of the Work of Art” was given as a lecture to people who would have associated certain parts of the lecture with the Nazi party and its ideology. It seems that, if we are to read Heidegger charitably in the sense that we read him as being intelligent, aware of Nazi rhetoric, and choosing his words carefully, we should think that he did not just so happen to use words that the Nazis used, and in the way they used them.

However, I hope to demonstrate that nationalism is not a necessary component of Heidegger’s thesis that great art founds a community. Specifically, I argue that Heidegger’s philosophy of art does not depend on nationalism in order for it to be a coherent and fruitful theory. My point is that regardless of one’s thoughts on Heidegger’s involvement with the Nazis, his ideas about the relation between art and people are worth exploring.

In *Philosophical Hermeneutics* (1966) Hans-Georg Gadamer writes:

About thirty years ago, this problem cropped up in a particularly distorted form when National Socialist politics of art, as a means to its own ends, tried to criticize formalism by arguing that art is bound to a people. Despite its misuse by the National Socialists, we cannot deny that the idea of art being bound to a people involves real insight. A genuine artistic creation stands within a particular community, and such a community is always distinguishable from the cultured society

that is informed and terrorized by art criticism.¹⁶

I am sympathetic with Gadamer's sentiment. We can say that, at a minimum, Heidegger was committed to some type of nationalism. However, his ideas about the relation between art and community are, never the less, insightful.

Whatever his reasons, Heidegger's conception of community is delineated nationalistically. A community is constituted by the people who belong to a particular nation. Heidegger's deep concern when it comes to founding a community is a concern about the German people.

After the first world war and the Treaty of Versailles, the very size of Germany was reduced, its air force was eliminated, its military diminished, and the country was left in financial ruin. Great art was a way for the German people to become the community Heidegger likely thought they were destined to become. Heidegger hoped for the ethnic German people to become a community. He understood ethnic Germans to be the people of the poets and this is likely one reason Heidegger thought that the founding of the a German community was to come. Heidegger's cyclical metaphors for the rise and fall of communities, referring to the time in which the gods are absent as "midnight," (OBT 201) tells us that Heidegger was likely on the lookout for the coming founding of the German community.

The people who were from the German land were the ones who could become

¹⁶Gadamer, *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, 5.

a community. Of course, the Greeks were also able to be a community,¹⁷ but it is unclear if Heidegger thought that any other people were able to come together in a way that constituted a community, until, perhaps, he came across and seriously engaged with Japanese art towards the end of his life.¹⁸

In the Winter 1944/1945, Heidegger gave his last lecture as an official tenured professor and with that lecture he makes clear that he is concerned with the German people and their relation to art. “Maybe we will recall that we ‘are called’ the people [*das Volk*] of poets and thinkers. Not only are we called the people, but we also are the people.” (IPTP 5/GA50 95) Heidegger hopes that the Germans will come together and fulfill their destiny of being a great people. He believed that only a “radical change” could restore Germany’s place within the world. Radical change [*Umwaelzung*] was one of Hitler’s favorite expressions.¹⁹

Heidegger’s use of nationalistic language is not constant throughout his philosophy of art. We know that Heidegger did not wish his involvement with Nazi party to be publicized, and we know that Heidegger became less enchanted with the party during the 1930s, and we can see a softening of nationalistic language through the progression of Heidegger’s philosophy of art when we attend to the development of his lecture on the origin of the work of art. He wrote these lectures

¹⁷See Dennis J. Schmidt’s *On Germans and Other Greeks: Tragedy and Ethical Life* for details on the intimate links between the Greeks and the Germans.

¹⁸See “A Dialogue on Language: Between a Japanese and an Inquirer,” in OWL.

¹⁹Ettinger, *Hannah Arendt/Martin Heidegger*, 57.

during the 1930s, and we will notice a dampening of nationalistic language when we compare the earlier version of the lecture to the later version. There are three versions of the lecture, and they were written (and some versions were delivered as lectures) around the mid 1930s.

The version of “Origin of the Work of Art” which we are most familiar with, and the one I have been discussing thus far in this dissertation, is the third version of the lecture. This version is published in *Poetry, Language, Thought* as “The Origin of the Work of Art,” in *Holzwege* (OBT/GA5), and delivered in Frankfurt during December and November in 1936. The other two versions of the lecture are earlier. One delivered the year before the one we are most familiar with (November 16, 1935) in Freiburg and again in Zurich in January 1936. This version was published in France in 1987 as the première or “first version,” *De l’origine de l’oeuvre d’art: Première version 1935* (PV) and an even earlier version published in *Heidegger Studies* titled “Vom Ursprung des Kunstwerks. Erste Ausarbeitung.”²⁰ This version is translated by Jerome Veith in HR as “On the Origin of the Work of Art: First Version.”²¹

²⁰*Heidegger Studies* 5 (1989) 5-22. I will use FV to refer to this earliest version of the Origin lecture. This is also the abbreviation I will use when citing the german version of the text, found in *Heidegger Studies* 5.

²¹HR also includes a translation of a note (HR 342) by Hermann Heidegger (Martin Heidegger’s non-biological son) which argues that the version in *Heidegger Studies* is the earliest version of the lecture. The note reads:

“The Origin of the Work of Art” (1935-1936) appeared in *Holzwege* (GA 5), in the autumn of 1945 (©1950).

Martin Heidegger’s thought on the mystery of art did not presume to solve it, but rather to

I do not provide an extensive comparison of the three versions of the lecture, but in order to keep straight which version I am talking about during the brief examination of nationalism in the first version (FV) and “Origin of the Work of Art,” I will refer to the earliest version of these lectures, the version titled “Vom Ursprung des Kunstwerks. Erste Ausarbeitung,” as the first version. The middle draft, published in France and delivered in Freiburg and Zurich, I will call the Freiburg version,²² and the version published in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, and *Holzwege*, I will call “Origin of the Work of Art.”

Leaving aside Heidegger for a moment, we should recognize that, of course, not all community founding works of art are nationalistic. There is a difference between the founding of a community and hoping that it fulfill its destiny as being the greatest nation, and a work of art founding community on other pretenses.

Jetsonorama, an Oakland California native, and a medical doctor and street artist in the Navajo Nation, creates works of art which found a community the

see it. The version published at that time included three lectures given at the *Freien Deutschen Hochstift* of Frankfurt am Main in 1936. They constituted the third development of this theme.

The second development was the first version in lecture form. This lecture was delivered to the *Kunstwissenschaftliche Gesellschaft* of Freiburg im Breisgau on 13 November 1935. “The Origin of the Work of Art.”

In 1978, the second draft was published in France as a bilingual, pirated printing, on the basis of the photocopy of the typed copy of the handwritten manuscript. It did not adhere to Martin Heidegger’s written emendations of the typed text.

Presented here is the undelivered, heretofore unpublished and thus unknown first draft of “On the Origin of the Work of Art.” Martin Heidegger had kept it, along with the other lectures on the same topic, in a drawer.

-Herman Heidegger

²²See Dastur’s “Heidegger’s Freiburg Version of the Origin of the Work of Art” for a systematic reading of the Freiburg lecture.

way Heidegger talks about the Greek temple founding a community.²³



Figure 3.1: Jetsonorama, *Hope and Trauma in a Poisoned Land: The Impact of Uranium Mining on Navajo Lands + People* Flagstaff, AZ. August 12-October 28, 2017. From Jetsonorama's website: <https://jetsonorama.net/category/uranium-contamination/>

Figure 3.1 shows a photograph of a uranium miner who died from a cancer related to his work in the mines.²⁴ The work of art, as we see it in the in Figure 3.1, is a photograph of the photograph held by the daughter of the miner in the photo. The daughter, Cyndy Begaye, told PBS in a 2018 interview with Chip

²³My thanks to Russ Pryba for introducing me to Jetsonorama's work during the 8th annual meeting of the Southwest Seminar in Continental Philosophy.

²⁴The neon radiation symbols were added by Jetsonorama.

Thomas (Jetsonorama), that Jetsonorama’s “murals reflect back our everyday life.” She also stated that “For me, it’s important to keep the memory alive, for my children, my future grandchildren. I want them to know how my father helped us to become who we are today.”²⁵

From Cyndy Begaye’s expression of her experience of Jetsonorama’s work, we can understand the image in Figure 3.1 to be a community founding work of art. From his position as a medical doctor in the Navajo Nation, Chip Thomas was able to recognize that many of the Navajo people suffered exposure to uranium. By placing the image shown in Figure 3.1 in public spaces, he was able to demonstrate to others, including the Navajo people, that many members of the Navajo community were subjected to extremely hazardous working conditions. Before the public display of “Hope and Trauma in a Poisoned Land: The Impact of Uranium Mining on Navajo Lands + People” members of the Navajo community may have known that their friends and family had been subject to such conditions, but after Jetsonorama created the work, members of the community were provided the opportunity to recognize that, as a community, they had been wronged in this particular way.

Through the reflection precipitated by jetsonorama’s work, individuals who were themselves affected by the uranium mining, or who knew people affected by

²⁵The interview can be found at <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/this-street-artist-portrays-navajo-life-with-large-scale-murals>

the mining, come to understand that they belong to a group of people who have been wronged by way of uranium mining operations. This recognition could lead to numerous outcomes. The community of indigenous peoples exposed to uranium through the mines may demand recompense from companies or the government, or tell the story to the younger generations of their family and explain it as constitutive of them as the people they are today. Regardless, the work in Figure 3.1 can be understood to have gathered a people by way of bringing them to recognize themselves as being victims in this particular way. They all belong to the group of people who were affected by the uranium mining, and this recognition, brought about by the work of art, constitutes the founding of a community.

This community is constituted by people who belong to a particular place. They are ethnic Americans in the way the Germans Heidegger was concerned with were ethnic Germans. Even though the community founded by Jetsonorama's work is made up of a people who belong to a particular nation and land, we would not say that the community is *nationalistic*. The community founded by Jetsonoram's work is not founded at the exclusion or detriment of other peoples, whereas the founding of the German people, as it was pursued by the Nazis, was obviously detrimental to other groups of peoples.

We can, I think, take the image in Figure 3.1 as an example of a community founding work of art in line with Heidegger's understanding of what this entails

— including ideas about seeming importance of the relation between the people and the land — without invoking the idea that community founding works of art necessarily found nationalistic communities. This is important, if we want to extract a fruitful philosophy of art from Heidegger's writings.

But even if we do accept Jetsonorama's work as fitting Heidegger's description of a community founding work of art, we may still find fault with the theory. Communities, it seems, require an 'other' for their very existence. A community founded by a work of art is made up of those who belong to the community — those whose community was founded by the work of art — and such a community can only exist through the exclusion of others. For Heidegger, the German community was made up of those who belonged and those who did not. The fault we may find with the theory is that, even if community founding is not inherently nationalistic, it is still exclusive, and perhaps even antagonistic towards those who are not part of the community.

However, as was eluded to earlier in this chapter, it is not necessarily the case that a community founded by a work of art is an exclusive community. Remembering back to the discussion about the Statue of Liberty, we will recall that the community founding by this work of art (if in fact it did found a community) was one which did not require the exclusion of others. All were welcome to become members of the community founded by the Statue of Liberty.

Jetsonorama's mural and the Statue of Liberty found communities in the way Heidegger describes works of art founding communities. Because of this, we can understand that even if nationalism is deeply rooted in Heidegger's writings, we can successfully extract a non-nationalistic theory of art from his philosophy.

One might argue that extracting the nationalism from Heidegger's philosophy of art, while it does leave us with a coherent philosophy of art, does not leave us with a Heideggarian philosophy of art. What we are left with may be a philosophy of art inspired by Heidegger, but we have tampered with it so much that it no longer reflects the theory Heidegger developed. If, however, we pay close attention to the development the three version of the lectures on art, we will notice that Heidegger himself moves away from nationalism. I do not point this out as a way of excusing Heidegger for his involvement with the Nazi party. I merely want to suggest that developing the charitable non-nationalistic reading of Heidegger's philosophy of art insofar as it argues for the possibility of communities to be founded by works of art is not a radical rereading of Heidegger. In fact, it may not be a rereading at all, but merely a look towards where Heidegger's philosophy of art was on track to end up.

Between the summer 1957 and autumn 1958,²⁶ Heidegger took down notes while visiting a Paul Klee exhibit. A few of the notes reflect Heidegger's willing-

²⁶Pöggeler, *Bild und Technik: Heidegger, Klee und die moderne Kunst*, 123.

ness to change his philosophy of art in light of what he learned from the Klee paintings.²⁷

[Seubold writes, citing Heidegger:] He [Heidegger] notes that the artwork essay [“The Origin of the Work of Art”] “thinks historically—the works that have been.” “No longer” is the constructing of the world and the setting forth of the earth, as thematized in the artwork essay, to be set as a task for future art, but rather the “bringing about of the re-lation from out of [the] event of the fugue.” (NK note 12)

[Seubold writes, citing Heidegger:] Heidegger attributes this special position to “East Asian ‘art’” as well; what is at stake in it—Heidegger notes “Zen” and “the nothing”—is not the “representation” of beings, but the leading of the human being to the space-granting nothing. (NK note 19)

“Can there still be ‘works’? Or is art destined for something else?” (NK note 21)

While it would be difficult to draw anything that could be considered a full-fledged theory from these notes, it is clear that Heidegger was considering radical changes to his philosophy of art, as it was presented in “Origin of the Work of Art.” These notes reveal that Heidegger was considering that the task of future art may be something different from past works of art, that he was now thinking through East Asian art, and that he was questioning the very possibility of art existing as ‘works’ in the future.

There is no evidence, in these notes, that Heidegger was specifically rethinking the nationalism in his philosophy of art, but his entertaining the idea of changing

²⁷The following quotes are presented here exactly as they appear in the translation, including brackets and quotation marks.

his philosophy opens the door for us to do the same. Even after three versions of the lecture, Heidegger was still tinkering.

The non-nationalistic reading of the lecture may be more accurately considered a possible further development of the lecture rather than a rereading. I say that it is a possible future development of the lecture because the nationalism is toned down in “Origin of the Work of Art” when compared to the first version of the lecture.²⁸ Similar to “Origin of the Work of Art,” in the first version of the lecture Heidegger discusses the founding of a people by the work of art, and explains that the great works of art contain the decisions of the people. Speaking of the same temple in the first version of the lecture as he does in the later versions, Heidegger states: “Towering into a world and reaching back into the earth, the temple opens the there in which a people comes to itself.” (HR 139/FV 12) In this quote we find the idea that from the strife between the earth and world, a people comes to be what it is, i.e. it becomes a people, a community. Before being what it is, a people is not a people. It is merely a collection of individuals, or as Heidegger calls it, a “public” [*Publikum*].

What we find in the first version that we do not find in “Origin of the Work of Art” is talk of the work at destroying the public in order to create a community.

²⁸This brief comparison avoids the Freiburg version because of questions about its authenticity, and because the toning down of nationalism is more evident when we compare the first version with “Origin of the Work of Art.”

Early in the first version, Heidegger writes: “Where an ‘audience’ [*Publikum*] exists, the work’s only relation to it is to destroy it.” (HR 134/FV 8) This language drips with Nazi connotations,²⁹ and we find similarly nationalistic language from Heidegger his “Rectorship Address,” written around the same time, where he talks about the German people knowing itself in its state [*Staat*].³⁰ (HR 109/GA16 108)

In “Origin of the Work of Art,” we do not find any talk of artworks destroying a public in order to found a community. Nor is Heidegger explicit about being exclusively concerned with the German people in the third version of the lecture. It may not be a stretch to infer that Heidegger only concerns himself with Germany and its artworks at the time he delivered “Origin of the Work of Art,” but even if this is the case, we know that he eventually lends his attention to artworks from other groups, especially Japanese art and works of art from other East Asian peoples.

We also have reason to believe that, later in life, Heidegger was embarrassed by his involvement to the Nazi party, even though he did not express this publicly. He did not want the lectures, articles, and speeches that tied him to the Nazi party to be published.³¹

²⁹Robert Bernasconi writes, speaking about Heidegger’s talk of destroying a public, that nothing could be more politically charged in Germany in the 1930s. “The Greatness of the Work of Art,” 106.

³⁰The German word *Staat* should be understood to mean ‘country.’ The word is not used to denote something along the lines of a ‘state of mind.’

³¹Ettinger, *Hannah Arendt/Martin Heidegger*, 122.

Chapter 4

Heidegger's and Arendt's Critique of Modernity

Both Hannah Arendt and Martin Heidegger are critical of the era they were writing in. We will call this era (or epoch) “modernity,” and it will roughly refer to the time since the beginning of the industrial revolution. With this chapter I demonstrate that, while Arendt and Heidegger characterize modernity in importantly different ways, their critiques are strikingly similar. Specifically, they both argue that the modern era lacks a certain *togetherness* that both thinkers understand to have existed before modernity, and existed especially among the ancient Greeks.

This chapter is organized into two sections. In the first section I explain

Heidegger's characterization of modernity. As he sees it, modernity is a time in which the world and everything in it, including ourselves, is understood as standing reserve — as things to be used and used up. In this section I will also spend time looking at Heidegger's characterization of the ancient Greeks.¹ This will be helpful in understanding why Heidegger looks to the ancient Greeks as exemplars of a community. Until now, a cursory idea of what Heidegger means when he talks about the ancient Greeks has been sufficient, but because we will be looking to both Arendt and Heidegger and their thoughts on the Greeks, a more detailed discussion is required to ensure that Arendt and Heidegger are roughly talking about the same thing when they talk about the Greeks. With the second section I layout Arendt's conception of modernity as being a time in which the distinction between the public realm and the private realm has collapsed, and from this collapse society has emerged.

In general, this chapter demonstrates that for both Arendt and Heidegger, modernity is characterized by a lack of togetherness. The differences between the thinkers amounts to differences in approach. Heidegger approaches modernity artistically, while Arendt approaches it politically. Despite theses different approaches, the philosophers arrive at strikingly similar conclusions.

¹For a more detail discussion of Heidegger's Greeks see HHGR §5d, Glenn W. Most's "Heidegger's Greeks," and *Heidegger and the Greeks: Interpretive Essays*, edited by Drew Hyland and John Manoussakis.

This dissertation is moving into Hannah Arendt’s work because, like Heidegger, she highlights an important and interesting relation between aesthetics (or the philosophy of art) and human beings. This chapter introduces Arendt’s temporally historical view of human beings through an explanation of her idea that previously, and especially during the time of the ancient Greeks, human beings had distinct private and public lives, but in modernity we exist as social beings and have lost the distinction between private and personal. This modern state of existence results in us being unable to come together in the way Arendt thinks the Greeks did. In the next chapter I detail how it is that Arendt thinks of politics in light of aesthetics by way of an examination of her *Lectures on Kant’s Political Philosophy*. It is in that chapter where we will see the continuation of the theme of thinking through community in light of ideas about art and beauty.

4.1 Heidegger and Modernity

Heidegger’s concern with modernity spans his career, but his concern is perhaps most evident in the texts he wrote around the latter half of his career, and particularly in some of the texts he planned to read aloud to an audience. For instance, in his lecture “Building Dwelling Thinking” (BW 323-339/GA7 145-164) — delivered to the Darmstadt Symposium on August 5, 1951 — Heidegger’s discussion of the severance between building and dwelling (a severance Heidegger

symbolically undoes in the title of the lecture by not separating the words with a comma) explains that the housing shortage, which existed in Europe following WWII, was not merely marked by a lack of buildings but also by a misunderstanding of the essential relation between existing and the structures of that existence.

The German verb *bauren*, which we translate as “to build,” in Old High German related to the noun *baun*, which means “to dwell.” Heidegger asserts that for us moderns, *bauren* has lost the “to dwell” part of its meaning. We have separated “to build” and “to dwell,” when originally they were the same. (BW 348)

We will notice that this etymological move is similar to the one Heidegger made in “Origin of the Work of Art” when he argued that our modern understanding of truth lacked the notion of *disclose* that was expressed by the ancient Greek word *aletheia*. These etymological arguments are not from a place of nostalgia. Heidegger is not trying to argue that a given word really means such-and-such because that is how the word was used long ago, the way some people like to argue that ‘philosophy’ really means loving wisdom because that is what the etymology of the word gets us to, when really most of us mean something much more akin to careful argumentation when we talk about philosophy. Heidegger’s etymological arguments never try to replace one meaning of a word with another meaning. Rather, the arguments return to the word a richness that has been lost over time.

The words Heidegger concerns himself with, such as *bauren* and *aletheia*, through losing the richness of their meaning, have impoverished our existence. When words lose something of themselves we lose from our lives that same something. Language shapes us, not the other way around, according to Heidegger, (BW 348) so when a word loses part its meaning we in turn lose the ability to understand in that particular way. When it comes to the loss of the idea of dwelling as part of building, we build structures without consideration for dwelling. We create a world that is not welcoming to us as dwelling beings.²

Modernity is marked by a blindness to possible ways of being in the world. We see the world as a collection of resources standing-reserve – ready to be used and used up. In “The Question Concerning Technology” Heidegger explains that through our modern technological way of understanding the world we look at the Rhine River as a source of hydroelectric power. (BW 312, 321) We are blind to other ways of understanding the Rhine. When it comes to buildings, we have become blind to buildings as dwelling places. We understand them as shelters, as places to work, to rest, etc. In the way that our losing the understanding of

²The notion of dwelling develops over the course of “Building Dwelling Thinking” and is not a term that lends itself to a simple definition. A few things we can gather about the term is that dwelling is the way in which mortals (human beings) are on the earth, (BW 326) that dwelling is a preserving which keeps together the fourfold in which we stay, (BW 329) building and dwelling are in an ends and means relationship, in which building is the means, (BW 324) and that at the same time, building and dwelling are not separate activities because “building is really dwelling.” (BW 326/GA7 150) (For an explanation of Heidegger’s fourfold see Andrew Mitchell’s *The Fourfold: Reading the Late Heidegger*.)

truth as *aletheia* made it the case that we were unable to see the truth revealed by the Van Gogh, or the temple, the loss the understanding of dwelling as part of building has made it the case that we no longer construct buildings for the sake of dwelling. In order to overcome the deficits that result the from dilution of our words, Heidegger reminds us of how certain words were understood before modernity. Because we are shaped by language, how we understand our words affects how we exist. Heidegger's revival of the Old High German understanding of *baun* and of the ancient Greek word *aletheia* reveals to us horizons of being which use to exist, but have since been covered over by our modern way of enframing [*Ge-stell*]³ the world as standing-reserve.

When addressing the question, “in what way does building belong to dwelling?” (BW 329/GA7 154) Heidegger uses the example of a bridge. “Building Dwelling Thinking” was written roughly 15 years after “Origin of the Work of Art,” but we can here echos of the ideas developed in that lecture in this bridge example. About the bridge, Heidegger states: “the bridge swings over the stream ‘with ease and power.’ It does not just connect banks that are already there. The banks emerge as banks only as the bridge crosses the stream.” (BW 354/GA7 154) In “Origin of the Work of Art,” when Heidegger first introduces the ancient Greek temple example, he states:

³“The Question Concerning Technology” was originally titled “The Enframing” and was first delivered in 1953. (BW 285)

Standing there, the building holds its place against the storm raging above it and so first makes the storm visible in its violence. The gleam and luster of the stone, though apparently there only by the grace of the sun, in fact first brings forth the light of day, the breadth of the sky, the darkness of night. The temple's firm towering makes visible the invisible space of the air. The steadfastness of the work stands out against the surge of the tide and, in its own repose, brings out the raging of the surf. Tree, grass, eagle and bull, snake and cricket first enter their distinctive shapes and thus come to appearance as what they are. (OBT 21/GA5 28)

Both the bridge and the temple bring into being the things that belong to the place. The river banks become what they are by way of being connected by the bridge; the raging of the surf comes into appearance as what it is through the temple. What Heidegger first noticed in works of art through their ability to bring together the setting up of a world and setting for earth (OBT 24) in a way such that things were revealed as what they are, he later recognizes in proper buildings. That is, in buildings which lend themselves to dwelling.

We may think that the similarities between the bridge and a work of art cease once we recognize that we use the bridge and do not experience it the way we experience a work of art. After all, what allowed us to understand the shoes in Van Gogh's painting to be equipment was in part the fact that we could not put the shoes on. However, when discussing the bridge, Heidegger mentions that those of us bringing it to mind may be much closer to the bridge when compared to those who use it in their daily lives. Not being able to use the bridge, much like our inability to wear the shoes in the Van Gogh painting, provides us with a nearness

in which we come to be able to recognize what is brought into appearance.⁴

Because of its ability to bring into appearance, the bridge is an instance of *poiēsis*, a bringing forth [*Her-vorbringen*]. Works of art are particularly good at this bringing forth, but Heidegger's understanding of art is not as restrictive as even our rather inclusive contemporary understanding of art. It is the nature of the work of art to bring forth, to disclose (*aletheia*) — and this is perhaps why Heidegger teaches his readers about *poiēsis* through discussing works of art in “Origin of the Work of Art” — but things beyond what has traditionally been considered artwork can bring forth as well.

Whether or not we should consider the bridge to be disclosing something, the way the Van Gogh disclosed the nature of shoes and the temple disclosed community, is not decided in the text. What we can say is that a world is set up by the bridge and that this itself is enough to constitute a bringing forth. “Bringing-forth brings out of concealment into unconcealment. Bringing-forth comes to pass only insofar as something concealed comes into unconcealment.” (BW 293/GA7 13) Because the bridge brings forth the banks of the river out of concealment, the bridge is an instance of *poiēsis*.

In “Origin of the Work of Art” Heidegger explains disclosure as coming about

⁴Heidegger discusses, at some length, a line from Hölderlin's poem “In beautiful blue...” quoted in its entirety by Heidegger at HHGR §4, which reads “Full of merit, yet poetically / Humans dwell upon this Earth.” By highlighting this line, we can see that Heidegger is thinking about the connection between poetry and dwelling.

through the strife between earth and world. By the time he comes to deliver the lectures “Building Dwelling Thinking” and “The Question Concerning Technology,” while the concept of earth appears to be unchanged, Heidegger has dropped the term ‘world’ and added the concepts *sky*, *mortals*, and *divinities*, developing what he calls the *fourfold*. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger introduced and developed the idea of *world*. Later, by the time he wrote “Origin of the Work of Art,” he had added *earth*, and from these two he was able to explain the primordial understanding of truth as *aletheia*. Years later, and most evidently in “Building Dwelling Thinking,” Heidegger adds the sky, the mortals, and the divinities. Together earth, sky, mortals, and divinities make up the fourfold. A charitable and consistent reading of this shift from the earth/world distinction to the fourfold would be one which understands Heidegger to be fleshing out his earlier concept of world in more detail by replacing that one term with three. We will recall that for Heidegger a world was a nexus of meaningful relations. Cashing out this nexus as sky, mortals, and divinities allows Heidegger to explain how this nexus is organized.

Unlike the relation between earth and world in works of art, there is no mention of a strife in the fourfold. The bridge “*gathers* the earth as landscape around the stream... the bridge is ready for the sky’s weather... [the bridge] grants way to the mortals so that they may come and go from shore to shore ... the bridge *gathers*,

as a passage that crosses, before the divinities.” (BW 330/GA7 154) The bridge, through its gathering, creates a space. (BW 331-32/GA7 156) The bridge, and proper buildings like it, create a space in which dwelling occurs. Buildings like the bridge are able to create a space in which dwelling occurs because they hold together, and therefore create, the nexus of meaningful connections which makeup the background of human existence.

To make this point explicitly, Heidegger poses the question, “what is the relation between man and space?” An answer to this question is necessary in order to understand how it is that we, as human beings, relate to buildings. This link is important for us to understand since we are attempting to see why Heidegger understands modernity to be marked by a lack of togetherness. Only by tracing the relation between building and dwelling, to space, and then to human beings, will it become evident that Heidegger does in fact consider our epoch to be lacking togetherness. We have already discussed the relation between building and dwelling, deciding that, according to Heidegger, the essence and purpose of building is for the dwelling as an end. The way dwelling comes about from a building was explained through the example of a bridge and an explanation as to how it is the bridge gathers and holds together the fourfold. This gathering and holding together creates a space. The last thing to be decided is the relation between space and man, and this can be explained briefly.

When explaining this relation, Heidegger immediately clarifies that he is not talking about space as if it were something outside of or facing human beings. As Heidegger puts it, when he says “a man” he is talking about a being which exists in a human manner, that is, as a being who dwells. (BW 358) Contained in the word ‘man’ is the idea of staying within the fourfold. Therefore, the act of building, when thought of properly, is the creation of spaces which bring about the proper place of human existence. Human beings are the types of beings who dwell, and the space for dwelling is created through building. Through proper building, human beings create the space which, so to speak, meets a condition of their existence as human beings, which is a space where we can dwell as “man,” and not merely places where we can exist as individual “men.” Losing sight of this has left us without dwelling spaces. We are homeless in our own buildings.

Towards the beginning of this chapter, I stated that Heidegger’s approach to explaining the lack of togetherness in modernity could be characterized as an aesthetic approach. Of course, given Heidegger’s dismissal of aesthetics, he would not call it that himself. I am using the term broadly to mean, basically, that if we follow Heidegger’s philosophy of art we can gain insight into why it is Heidegger thinks modernity is lacking togetherness. So far in this section we have seen that Heidegger argues that modernity is marked by the world being understood as a collection of resources. Us moderns, thinks Heidegger, even understand ourselves

and others as standing-reserve. We have also looked to Heidegger's diagnosis that we have lost sight of the relationship between building, dwelling, and human beings, and that we have lost sight of how to build properly, that is, in a way which allows for "man" to dwell. Human beings are separated because we no longer build in a way which holds in place the fourfold and have therefore lost the ability to interact in the way permitted by the nexus of earth, sky, mortals, and divinities. In finishing this section we will turn our attention more explicitly to Heidegger's philosophy of art. We have already looked at the strikingly similar way Heidegger talks about proper building and great works of art, but now we will examine Heidegger's idea that the gods have fled, and that modernity is a time without gods. In the previous chapters it was established that Heidegger thinks great works of art found communities, and that the way this occurs is through artists listening to the hints from the gods and then creating works of art that make these hints accessible to the people. If the gods have fled, as Heidegger argues they have, then there are no gods for the poets to receive hints from, which makes it the case that no great works of art come about which found communities. Furthermore, if the gods are away, then it is unclear how the fourfold can be held in place. The question of how or if there can be the fourfold in a time where there are no gods is a question beyond the scope of this dissertation. Before turning to Arendt, what needs to be discussed is Heidegger's concern about the fleeing of

the gods and how this makes it the case that the modern era is a time which lacks togetherness.

To begin, it is important to briefly examine the relation between the terms ‘community’ and ‘togetherness.’ These terms are obviously closely related. For Heidegger, because of what he means by community, if there is no community then there is a lack of togetherness. So in order to establish that Heidegger understands modernity to lack togetherness all that needs to be established is that we live in a time lacking in community, and this will be demonstrated by explaining Heidegger’s idea that we live in a time in which the gods have fled. This will also establish the link between Heidegger’s philosophy of art and his critique of modernity. However, Heidegger’s claim that in modernity buildings are not built with dwelling as their end, and that this lack of proper building means that we are not able (or at the very least less able) to dwell as ‘man,’ is strong evidence in itself that Heidegger understands modernity to be marked by a lack of togetherness.

I have already explained Heidegger’s idea that poets (artists in general) listen to the gods and then relay the message in a way such that a community is founded. Heidegger says this nearly explicitly with the section title “Poetizing as Receiving the Beckonings of the Gods and Passing Them on to the People.” (HHGR 30) In the epilogue to “Origin of the Work of Art” Heidegger argues that since the riddle

of art was first brought about,⁵ it has been approached with a concern for the experience of art, for art as an aesthetic object. Often when we study aesthetics, we do not concern ourselves with the truth happening of the work of art, rather we evaluate the artistic creation, and the artist themselves, on a standard of sensuous apprehension experience. While this, certainly, contributed to the death of art, (OBT 50) it alone is not accountable. Although critical of the aestheticization of art, Heidegger does not suggest that aesthetics should be eliminated from art all together, merely that its domination of art, at the expense of truth, is at least in part responsible for the death of art. There is nothing inherently wrong with an aesthetically pleasing work of art, and such a work of art could have the potential to be a great work of art, but the essence of art is lost when aesthetic experience encompasses the entirety of the artwork.

Heidegger spends time discussing many artists and works of art concerned with more than just aesthetics. Hölderlin and Klee are both artists which Heidegger admires for their ability to embody the sort of strife discussed earlier, rather than merely evoke a sensuous enjoyment.

In Klee, Heidegger discovers a modern artist whose work is not metaphysical. Unlike other modern artists, Klee does not negate the object but rather allows the object to disappear. Speaking of Klee's work, Heidegger writes "these are not

⁵Heidegger probably understands this to have occurred with Socrates. This was, according to Hegel, when art was required to justify itself.

images, but states.” (NK §3)⁶ The artist himself understood the task of art to be a making visible rather than a production of the visible.

Underneath a sketch he made of Klee’s Saint from a Window, Heidegger writes “If one obliterates of the ‘image’-character – what is there to ‘see’?” (NK §23) “What one sees is production.”⁷ When the object characterizes art, either something is posited in the art, which is representative of something else, or, like in most abstract art, we find the negation of the object and representation. In both sorts of art the object is at the center of the work, rendering it metaphysical. The disappearance of the object in Klee’s artwork allows for the art to appear in an entirely different way. The bringing forth itself is seen in the work. We see the process of a genesis, rather than objects of the world.⁸

In a discussion with Heidegger, the Japanese philosopher and Buddhist scholar Shin’ichi Hisamatsu comments that Saint from a Window “has something of Japanese calligraphy to it.” (RM 2) More than a hundred years ago, the western aesthetic conception of art (gei-jiz) over took the traditional Japanese under-

⁶An excerpt from one of Klee’s writings, copied by Heidegger.

⁷Schmidt p. 92. In his book, *Between Word and Image: Heidegger, Klee, and Gadamer on Gesture and Genesis*, Schmidt provides a further transcription of Heidegger’s note under the sketch of Saint, from a Window.

⁸I have some hesitation in stating that this genesis we are able to see in Klee is the strife between earth and world as described by Heidegger in “Origin of the work of Art.” As I mentioned earlier in this dissertation, some of Heidegger’s notes on Klee suggest that Klee’s work may constitute a rethinking of the entire project developed in “Origin of the Work of Art.” For example, §21 in “Notes on Klee” Heidegger writes “Can there still be ‘works’? Or is art destined for something else?”

standing (gei-do). Traditional Japanese art, according to Hisamatsu, had a deep relationship to life and the nature of human beings. The essence of Zen art is “not to gain the origin but to let it come to appear itself. (RM 2) Heidegger finds in traditional Zen art what he admires in Klee’s paintings.

However, while Klee and a handful of other artists are able to resist the aestheticization of art and allow their art to embody the strife discussed earlier, these artists did not create great works of art. The work of neither Klee, nor Van Gogh, nor Hölderlin has the life directing role the temple had. The modern conception of art is, in general, that it is something that one must be to appreciate. The very idea that art is something that is to be appreciated, in the way we speak about the appreciation of art, is symptomatic of the lack of a communal aspect and aestheticization.

Great works of art are those works that, in part, unify and orient a group of people. When a group of people have as a part of their community a work of great art, their relations to one another is changed from the being with others that we explored in the first section, to a being alongside one another. Only when a people is united by a shared task, that is both bestowed upon them, and demanded, by great works of art, do we have this shift in our orientation with others from the being-with to the being-along-side, or authentic community. This community is not achievable merely by living under a roof together, or sharing meals and a place

to sleep.

Heidegger's hope, and expectation, is that the German people will become a community in the near future. Heidegger understood the time he was writing in to be a time between the old gods and the new. That is, between a time when there were gods for the artists to receive hints from and a time where there will again be gods to receive hints from. Being in between gods makes it the case that artists are unable to create community founding works of art. The loss of the gods is explicitly tied to modernity by Heidegger in his essay "Age of the World Picture" when he states that the loss of the gods is a phenomena of modernity. (OBT 58) Why and how the gods have fled is a topic too rich and beyond the scope of this dissertation to investigate here. What is important for our purposes is that Heidegger characterizes modernity as a time without gods, and that this makes it the case that artists cannot create community founding works of art.

The Greeks lived in a time when there were gods, and they related to beings in an importantly different way that us moderns do. As Heidegger puts it, we have a "picture" of the world but the Greeks did not. In modernity we "bring the present-at-hand before one as something standing over-and-against, to relate it to oneself, the representer, and, in this relation, to force it back to oneself as the norm-giving domain." (OBT 69/GA5 91) We place ourselves within the world picture, which is to say we relate to ourselves and everything else through enframing. The

Greeks relate to the existence of beings in a different way. When explaining how Parmenides understood the human beings relation to beings, Heidegger writes:

The being is that which rises up and opens itself; that which, as what is present, comes upon man, i.e., upon him who opens him self to what is present in that he apprehends it. The being does not acquire being in that man first looks upon it in the sense of representation that has the character of subjective perception. Rather, man is the one who is looked upon by beings, the one who is gathered by self opening beings into presencing with them. To be looked at by beings, to be included and maintained and so supported by their openness, to be driven about by their conflict and marked by their dividedness, that is the essence of humanity in the great age of Greece. In order to fulfill his essence, therefore, man has to gather and save, catch up and preserve, the self-opening in its openness; and he must remain exposed to all of its divisive confusion. (OBT 68/GA5 90-1)

While we will be covering over the richness and complexity of the distinction between the Greek way of relating to beings and the modern way, we can summarize the distinction by stating that moderns take the subject object distinction very seriously and understand beings in relation to other beings in terms of resources. The world is at our fingertips. On the other hand, the Greeks were looked upon by beings. They were the observe, and their representation of the world was at the mercy of presencing beings. At the end of the block quote above, Heidegger ends by asserting something along the lines of the idea that the Greeks embraced a blooming buzzing confusion as opposed to enframing it.

We should pause for a moment to ask the question, which Greeks is Heidegger talking about? It would be helpful if Heidegger was talking about the Greeks of a

particular time and place, but there is nothing which indicates that that is the case. Conservatively, we should say that the Greeks are a people who existed during an epoch before the Middle Ages, but we may be able to get away with saying that Heidegger has the pre-socratic Greeks in mind, since he quotes Parmenides when explaining how the Greeks relate to being and is regularly critical of the shift in philosophy brought about by Socrates and Plato. So while we cannot confidently list the Greeks Heidegger is talking about, or give a specific time in history, we do know the characteristics of these people that Heidegger highlights as being important. Namely, we have seen that Heidegger characterizes these Greeks as being open to the chaos of being. This is closely related to being able to experience truth as *aletheia* since being able to experience truth in this way requires that one be open to simultaneous covering over and uncovering, which is in turn related to works of art since it is works of art which can teach us to experience truth as *aletheia*. Being open to beings is also important when considering Heidegger's conception of the fourfold since the fourfold is the very being open to, and gathering of, the diverse confusion.

These characteristics are lacking in modernity. We do not need to try to flesh out the relationship between these characteristics. It is not clear that how they are related is important, and Heidegger himself avoids explaining the relationship in detail by simply listing the characteristic phenomena of modernity. Specifically,

he lists five characteristic phenomena of modernity including modern science, machine technology, art as aesthetics, human practices being understood as culture, and the loss of the gods. (OBT 57-8)

Heidegger acknowledges that Christianity and other religions are still practiced throughout the world but argues that God and the gods are distant in our time. Helpfully, Heidegger tells us exactly what he means by this. “The default of God means that a God no longer gathers men and things to himself visibly and unmistakably and from this gathering ordains world-history and man’s stay within it.” (OBT 200/GA5 269)⁹ Without the gods or God, human beings do not have decisions ready made. The gathering of the fourfold is unable to occur because of the absence of the gods and the underlying guiding principles that their presence brings with it. We are lost within world-history. The Greeks were looked upon by being, which made it the case that they had a place within which they dwelt. The gods provide the underlying story of life and the universe within which the place of human beings is determined. Without the gods we have no such place. Things and people are not gathered together. An ungathered world is one which shows up as a collection of individual items, ready to use and to use up.

Even with the gods absent, poets (artists in general) are still important. This is what Heidegger attempts to make clear in “...Why Poets?” (OBT 200-41) Poets

⁹Shortly after this sentence Heidegger states that both God and the gods have fled.

are important even in desolate times because the gods will not be absent forever. Modernity is the world's night between the old gods and the new, and Heidegger speculates that we may be in, or are approaching, the midnight of this night – a time when the destitution is so absolute that it is not able to be experienced.¹⁰ (OBT 201) Poets track the gods and prepare the ground for their return.¹¹ “Poets are the mortals who [...] sense the track of the fugitive gods; they stay on the gods’ track, and so they blaze a path for their mortal relations, a path toward the turning point.” (OBT 202/GA5 272)

It is clear that Heidegger thinks that this time in which the gods are absent is not a hopeless time. His temporal metaphors suggest that the time without gods will eventually come to an end. However, this turn from midnight towards the new gods requires an active waiting rather than a passive waiting. Preparation is required, if the gods are to return at all. (OBT 201) If we attend to the artists Heidegger writes about with admiration, we can begin to understand what this ground preparation and tracking looks like. We will remember that when Heidegger came across Klee’s work, he wrote that it was not metaphysical. By which he meant that it did not have an object as its content. When we look at

¹⁰This comment about not being able to experience the absence of the gods is helpful for those of us still working to understand what it is that Heidegger thinks the Greeks had that we no longer do. It may be the case, and this is what this comment points to, that us moderns are so far into desolation that it is difficult to even comprehend what is lacking.

¹¹Heidegger characterized the time without gods as a time without a grounding for the world. (OBT 200)

works such as those like Klee's "Saint from a Window" we see a process, a genesis. This is an artist tracking the gods. Klee is keeping open a path in which the world is not understood as standing reserve.

4.2 Arendt and Modernity

Arendt arrives at a similar diagnosis of modernity, although she gets there by a different path. She argues that a lack of togetherness is a characteristic feature of modernity and points to the Greeks as a people who did not lack togetherness. With this section I seek only to show that Hannah Arendt does make this argument. I do not intend to argue whether she is correct in her assessment. Regardless of whether Heidegger or Arendt are correct in their assessments, that we notice a trend of thinkers arguing that modernity is lacking something important is in itself something worth attending to.

We have good reason to think that Arendt is roughly talking about the same thing as Heidegger when she talks about the Greeks. In her book, *The Human Condition* (HC), Arendt argues that there are three fundamental human activities, labor, work, and action. (HC 7) These activities are designated by the term *vita activa*, and this term is contrasted with *vita contemplativa*, or 'contemplative life.' Arendt seeks to recover *vita activa* from the idea that it is inferior to *vita contemplativa*. As Arendt understands it, since Socrates, and especially with

Plato and Aristotle, *vita contemplativa* has been seen as the only free way to live. She points to Plato's political philosophy as being organized in such a way so as to make the philosophers way of life possible, and Aristotle's articulation of the different ways of life being guided by the ideal of contemplation. (HC 14)

Each of the three activities (labor, work, and action) correspond to an aspect of human existence on earth.¹² Labor corresponds to biological processes of the human body. (HC 7) Because we live, grow, and decay, our bodies need to be fed. Work corresponds to the parts of human existence which are not subject to growth and decay. Work creates things like tools, houses, and any other designed or constructed things which are part of human existence. Finally, action corresponds to the condition of plurality, which is the fact that "men, not Man, live on earth and inhabit the world." (HC 7) This activity is conducted between individuals without any mediating things or matter. Also, this condition is the condition that relates to politics. This is not to say that the other conditions cannot in someway also relate to politics in some way, but Arendt is clear that plurality is both the necessary and sufficient condition of all political life. (HC 7)

¹²It is important that Arendt distinguish between human nature and conditions, and specify that she is concerned with conditions. Explicitly, she states that it is not the case that without the conditions of human existence she discusses that such a life would not be human. She avoids a debate about what makes us human and instead explains the conditions for a human life on earth. (HC 9-10) Conditions of human existence never fully explain who we are as human beings because we are never conditioned absolutely. (HC 11) We could live on another planet or develop new technologies which would change some of the conditions of human life, but such a life would be no more or less human in terms of human nature.

Arendt is not creating the term *vita activa*, rather she is pulling it from history and explaining it. The term came about with our tradition of political thought, which in turn developed with the tension between the philosopher and the *polis*, highlighted by and culminating with Socrates' trial. It is at this time that we see the rise of the superiority of the contemplative life over the active life. At the point in history where the distinction between *vita activa* and *vita contemplativa* comes into focus, the distinctions between the three activities of *vita activa* dissolve. As Arendt explains, "My contention is simply that the enormous weight of contemplation in the traditional hierarchy has blurred the distinctions and articulations within the *vita activa* itself [...]" (HC 17) She does not wish to flip this hierarchy, rather Arendt argues that the activities of the *vita activa* are neither superior nor inferior to the *vita contemplativa*.

Arendt's statement, that the *vita activa* has been thought of as inferior to *vita contemplativa*, is in itself an argument which proposes that there exists a lack of togetherness. This is clear from her statement that "The *vita activa* [...] is always rooted in a world of men and of man-made things which it never leaves or altogether transcends." And again a few lines later when she writes, "All human activities are conditioned by the fact that men live together, but it is only action that cannot even be imagined outside the society of men." (HC 22) On the next page she makes it apparent that she understands the Greeks to have known this

special relationship between action and being together with others, and that it is in the Roman interpretation of Greek thought which we see the degradation of the distinctions between the activities of *vita activa* and the the rise of the importance placed on the contemplative life.¹³

This special relationship between action and being together seems fully to justify the early translation of Aristotle's *zōon politikon* by *animal socialis*, already found in Seneca, which then became the standard translation through Thomas Aquinas: *homo est naturaliter politicus, id est, socialis* ("man is by nature political, that is, social"). More than any elaborate theory, this unconscious substitution of the social for the political betrays the extent to which the original Greek understanding of politics had been lost. For this, it is significant but not decisive that the word "social" is Roamn in origin and has no equivalent in Greek language or thought. Yet the Latin usage of the word *societas* also originally had a clear, though limited, political meaning; it indicated an alliance between people for a specific purpose, as when a men organize in order to rule other or to commit a crime. It is only with the later concept of a *societas generis humani*, a "society of mankind," that the term "social" begins to acquire the general meaning of a fundamental human condition. It is not that Plato or Aristotle was ignorant of, or unconcerned with, the fact that man cannot live outside the company of men, but they did not count this condition among the specifically human characteristics; on the contrary, it was something human life had in common with animal life, and for this

¹³Although Arendt does continually point to Plato's and Aristotle when explaining the rise of the hierarchy which she seeks to undo, she does not go so far as to blame these thinkers. Rather, it seems that it is more likely the case that Arendt thinks Roman interpretations of Plato's and Aristotle's works is what is really responsible for the hierarchy. The Greeks may have seen the coming of the hierarchy and of the dilution of the distinction between public and private life but did not themselves argue that this hierarchy or dilution ought to come about. I will discuss the private/public distinction shortly, but this statement from Arendt is helpful to us now when trying to get clear on who Arendt's Greeks are and whether thinkers like Aristotle and Plato are responsible for the turn away from community. "Even Plato, whose political plans foresaw the abolition of private property and an extension of the public sphere to the point of annihilating private life all together, still speaks of Zeus Herkeios, the protector of border lines, and calls the *horoi*, the boundaries between one estate and another, divine, without seeing any contradiction. (HC 30)

reason alone it could not be fundamentally human. (HC 23-4)

Because living along side others was seen as a condition of human life as well as animal life, action came to be considered closer to the activities of labor and work. Companionship was a necessity imposed on us by our biological needs. It is a limitation. (HC 24) However, the Greeks conception of politics is not synonymous with our natural need to live with others. According to Arendt, since the rise of the city state the Greeks had two distinct orders of existence. There was a distinction between their own private life and communal life. (HC 24) The realm of the communal life — by which Arendt is referring to Aristotle's *bios politikos* — everything that relates to the necessities of human life are excluded. The necessities such as eating and being a part of a family belong to the private life. There is, for Aristotle, an important difference between political rule and household rule which is covered over by Latin translations of his work. This covering over occurs with the translation of 'political' as 'social.' (HC 27)

This misunderstanding, while it first arises with the Greek terms being translated into Latin, becomes even more confusing in modernity, according to Arendt. The emergence of the modern age coincided with the rise of the social realm, which is neither public nor private. (HC 28) The very concepts of nation-state and political economy make no sense with a distinction between the public and the private. Modern politics concerns itself the the private lives of individuals

and the necessities of human existence. For the Greeks, ‘political economy’ would have been a contradiction of terms. (HC 29) Economics regards necessities of human existence, politics transcends these things. Only with the rise of the social and the blurring of the line between the political and the private can something like a maternal government or a political economy even conceptually make sense. For the Greeks, “No activity that served only the purpose of making a living, of sustaining only the life process, was permitted to enter the political realm [...] politics is never for the sake of life.” (HC 37)

The distinction between the public and the private realm is important, for Arendt, because the public realm is the realm of freedom and equality. When the distinction is sharp, one is able to leave the household (a place of strict inequality and where one is subject to the necessities of life) and enter into the public sphere in which recognizes only equals and in which individuals are not subject to the necessities of life. Arendt notes that the equality that comes about with the political realm (which is synonymous with the public realm when Arendt is talking about the Greeks) means something distinct from our modern conception of equality. According to Arendt, with the distinction between the public and private realms in place, equality meant “to live among and it have to deal only with one’s peers [...]. Equality, far from being connected with justice, as in modern times, was the very essence of freedom: to be free meant to be free from the inequality present

in rulership and to move in a sphere where neither rule nor being ruled existed.” (HC 33) With the rise of the social, the concerns of the household — that is, the concerns of the private life and concerns about the necessities of human existence — became collective concerns.

In the modern world, the two realms indeed constantly flow into each other like waves in the never-resting streams of the life process. The disappearance of the gulf that the ancients had to cross daily to transcend the narrow realm of the household and ‘rise’ into the realm of politics is an essentially modern phenomenon. (HC 33)

The disappearance of this gulf brings about the “society,” which is a hybrid realm in which private interests become the concern of the public. (HC 35)

What is left to be shown in this section is that the rise of society brings about a lack of togetherness, and Arendt makes it clear she thinks that this is the case when she argues that “society, on all its levels, excludes the possibility of action [...]” (HC 40) Action has been replaced by behavior (HC 41) and with the loss of action in modernity we lose the activity of unmediated interpersonal interaction. In modernity, the foremost mode of interaction between individuals is not action, it is behavior. (HC 41) Interaction through behavior is *mediated* interaction. According to Arendt, when the Greeks were among equals, that is, when they transcended the private realm and entered the public realm, they “could show who they really and inexchangeably were.” (HC 41) They were able to be together. Interacting through behavior requires that one conform to a certain standard.

This conformity is itself a mediation. Behavior comes between individuals.

Interactions mediated by behavior likely makes interactions more pleasant than they otherwise would be, but this does not make it the case that such interactions are unmediated. It may be the case that to have pleasant or civil interactions the interactions themselves must be mediated by behavior. However, when such mediation occurs, togetherness is necessarily dissolved since we are unable to see one another without the veil of mediation.

Chapter 5

Arendt's Kantian Political Philosophy

The previous chapter introduced a parcel of Arendt's political philosophy and demonstrated that she was concerned that a lack of togetherness marked modernity. Arendt's project is interesting for many reasons in its own right, but in this dissertation her analysis was introduced as a way of gesturing towards a theme discussed by many 20th century thinkers. In comparing her thought to Heidegger's we were able to see that both thinkers were concerned with a lack of togetherness. With this chapter I explain the aesthetic philosophy influence in Arendt's political philosophy in the hopes of further developing this theme by demonstrating that both Arendt and Heidegger understood aesthetics, or the philosophy of art, to be

of the utmost importance when considering the relation between human beings. However, this chapter has, in addition to explaining the aesthetic influences in some of Arendt's work, a task specific to Arendt's work.

In *Lecture's on Kant's Political Philosophy* Hannah Arendt argues for a political philosophy inspired by Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. This approach is unique because Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgment* is a work devoted to providing an analysis of taste and has very little to say about politics. In this analysis, Kant proposes a disinterested approach to judgments of taste. This position has been criticized by feminist philosophers for ignoring 'situatedness,' the fact that all judgments are made from the position of our particular social situation. The specific task of this chapter is to demonstrate that the Kantian political philosophy developed by Arendt is not subject to this critique. There are three main sections to this chapter. In the first, I provide a brief exegesis of Kantian disinterestedness, to the extent required for Arendt's project. With the second section I lay out the political philosophy Arendt developed based on Kant's aesthetics. Finally, I demonstrate the feminist critique against Kant's disinterested approach, and explain how Arendt's Kantian political philosophy avoids this critique.

One question that will be set aside in this chapter is the question as to what extent the political philosophy developed by Arendt in *Lecture's on Kant's Politi-*

cal Philosophy is Kantian at all. It may be the case that by interpreting Kant the way Arendt does (and the way she needs to in order for her political philosophy to avoid the situatedness critique) she ends up with a political philosophy that, while it may have been inspired by Kant's writings, is not a Kantian political philosophy.

5.1 Kant

Kant argues that the judgment of the beautiful is a subjective, universal, and disinterested judgment. To understand all that this argument entails we will look at three points: (1) beauty is not objective, (2) a judgment of the beautiful is a disinterested judgment, and (3) a judgment of the beautiful is a universal judgment. These points are fleshed out in the Four Moments of Taste in the 3rd Critique. This section is dedicated to an exegesis of the four moments and to highlighting the three points listed above.

Each of the four moments of taste disclose a particular moment that is contained in every judgment of taste. That is, every judgment of taste has four distinguishing features, each one of which is a moment. It is through the faculty of taste that we make judgments of beauty, and by analyzing these judgments Kant reveals the four moments that make up every judgment of the beautiful. Each of the moments is required for every judgment of the beautiful. The order in

which Kant moves through these moments carries no great weight, each moment is just as important as any other. This explication will follow the order Kant presented the moments, considering first the moment of *quality*, then moving to *quantity*, *relation*, and *modality*.

First Moment

In the first moment, Kant maps out the hierarchy of aesthetic judgments, judgments of taste, and judging something to be beautiful. The very first thing that Kant points out is that when we are deciding whether something is beautiful, we do not appeal to rationality or logic in making the decision. Rather, we look to the pleasure that the subject (the viewer of a work of art, the reader of a poem...) feels. (KU 5:204) Because we look to pleasure, we know that judgments of beauty fall under the umbrella of aesthetic judgments. Beautiful objects, however, are not the only things that give us pleasure. There are several different categories underneath aesthetic judgments, but they are divided between two broad camps. Some aesthetic judgments are interested judgments, and the others are disinterested. Kant places a fairly low bar on how interested the subject has to be when making a judgment for that judgment to fall under the category of interested. As long as the subject desires the object to continue existing, then any judgment made will be an interested judgment. “One must not be in the least

biased in favor of the existence of the thing, but must be entirely indifferent in this respect in order to play the judge in matters of taste.” (KU: 5:205)¹

Being indifferent to the existence of the thing does not mean that we cannot be upset if a beautiful thing is destroyed or becomes nonexistent in some other way. What Kant is getting at here is that when we are making a judgment of taste, at that moment, we cannot be considering the existence of the thing, or hoping that it remains so that others can view or hear it, or so that I may be able to enjoy it in the future. When I desire the things existence, I am no longer in the position to make a judgment of taste. This does not mean, however, that after I make a judgment of beauty, that I cannot then hope that the thing that I have judged continues to exist.

After the first division of aesthetic judgments into interested and disinterested, Kant explains that there are two categories of interested judgments, and one category of disinterested judgments. The single disinterested category was mentioned in the Kant quote above. All disinterested aesthetic judgments are judgments of taste. But when we make judgments of taste, we do not say “this is tasteful,” rather we judge the thing to be either beautiful or sublime. So if we assert that something is beautiful, or that something is sublime, we are making a judgment of taste, which is a disinterested judgment.

¹Citations of this text refer to pagination or section.

Interested aesthetic judgments have a bit more to them. All interested judgments are not of the same kind. There are two distinct classes under interested judgments, judgments of the *agreeable* and judgments of the *good*.² Because judgment of the agreeable and judgments of the good are both interested judgments, they concern the desire for the object being judged to continue existing. In addition, not only do these judgments come with the desire for the thing being judged to continue to exist, but it comes with the desire for things of that kind to continue existing. For example, if I am enjoying eating a dessert, I am not only glad that the dessert exists right now in front of me, I also hope that desserts of that kind continue to exist into the future. This particular example of an interested judgment is a judgment of the agreeable, because it was a judgment about something that was pleasing to the senses. If something pleases us through an appeal to our sense, and we judge it as such, then we are judging that thing to be agreeable, and we want that thing, and things of that kind, to continue existing so that they can continue to please our senses.

When we turn our attention to the other category of interested judgments (judgments of the good) we see that Kant distinguishes between two ways in which something can be good. First, things can be good merely insofar as they are a means. (KU 5: 207) For example, we call a vehicle good if it is good at

²Kant's discussion of the judgments of the agreeable begins at KU 5:206, and his discussion of judgments of the good begins at KU 5:207.

getting us where we need to go. But in addition, things can be good in themselves. We can call a tree a good tree without considering it as potential building material or fuel. Similar to judgments of the agreeable, judgments of the good come with a desire for the continued existence of the thing (and things of that kind) being judged. In fact, the continued existence of the thing being judged will likely bear on our judgment. I would not judge a vehicle to be good if I suspected that it would, in a short time, stop being able to get me where I need to go.

Good things give us intellectual pleasure whereas agreeable things give us sensual pleasure, but there are some important differences between good things and agreeable things beyond how they give us pleasure. For instance, agreeableness can be judged immediately, while judgments of the good are sometimes immediate while other times they are mediate. Also, if we are to judge a thing to be good, we have to know what kind of thing it is supposed to be. That is, we have to apply a concept to it. Whereas, something can be agreeable, and please my senses, without me having any idea what the thing is. (KU 5: 207-8) Let us return to the dessert example to explain these differences. When I taste the dessert, I can immediately make a judgment about whether it is agreeable, but if I want to make a judgment about the dessert insofar as its role in nourishment (judging whether it is good for nourishment), I will have to consider the ingredients of the dessert *before* I can make a judgment. Furthermore, I can taste something that I

know nothing about and still judge it to be agreeable, whereas I could not judge that same thing to be good. I cannot judge it to be good for me, nor can I judge it to be an excellently prepared sample of the kind of thing that it is because I do not know what kind of thing it is supposed to be.³

We have at this point borrowed all we need from the first moment. Most of what we looked at had little to do with beauty, but by carving out the aesthetic judgments that are not concerned with beauty, we have made room. Now we see that one should not call something beautiful if it is merely pleasing to the senses, because we are in that case only in the position to call it agreeable, and if we are considering the utility of a thing, we are in that instance also in no position to judge that thing to be beautiful. The second moment will begin to fill in the space left for beauty.

Second Moment

³Kant mentions in a short paragraph at KU 5:207 that our finding something beautiful is connected to a concept. In this way, finding things to be beautiful is similar to our satisfaction in the good and distinct from our satisfaction in the agreeable. There is, however, an important difference between the relationship between the good and concepts, and the beautiful and concepts. If I am to judge something to be good, I must have a concept of it (know what kind of thing it is supposed to be), and then the thing that I am judging is placed under the concept. With judgments of the beautiful, I start with the beautiful thing, and then upon reflection of that thing, I am lead to a concept. With judgments of the good, we go from a category and then subsume a specific instance under that category, when we call something beautiful we are going in the reverse direction. When making judgments of the good, we are making what Kant calls a *determining* judgment, and when we judge something to be beautiful, we are making a *reflecting* judgment. Kant argues that all judgments of taste and teleological judgments are reflective judgments.

From what was stated in the first moment, we know that Kant argues that we can deduce that “the beautiful is that which, without concepts, is represented as the object of universal satisfaction.” (KU 5:211)⁴ The satisfaction one feels when they judge something as beautiful is not grounded on any interest. In fact, the subject cannot point to any source of the pleasure specific to her own person. Because of this, the subject is drawn to the conclusion that whatever grounds the satisfaction can be found in everyone and that everyone must experience a similar pleasure when judging the object. Consequently, beauty will be spoken of *as if* it were a property of the object being judged even though beauty is found only between the subject and the representation of the object. If the grounds of satisfaction were in fact part of the object itself, we may still demand that others recognize the satisfaction, but because the satisfaction would be grounded on a concept (something objectively a part of the thing being judged), the judgment of taste would be a judgment of the good and not of the beautiful.

Being that the satisfaction is not grounded in something unique to the individual subject, we know that the satisfaction is universal, but because the satisfaction is not grounded in the object being judged, this universality is not objective. Kant therefore concludes that disinterested judgments of taste are valid for every subject without this universality being rooted in any object, so disinterested judgments

⁴What it quoted is the title of §6.

of tasted are universal and subjective. (KU §6)

Also in this moment, Kant poses and answers the question of whether the pleasure preceded the judgment, in a judgment of taste, or if it is the other way around. (KU §9) His answer to this question is important in understanding the development of the claim of necessity in regards judging things to be beautiful, which is made in the fourth moment. Kant makes clear that the pleasure cannot come first, because if it were the case that the pleasure preceded the judging of the object, then the judgment could not have universal validity since the pleasure would be grounded in the agreeableness of the object to the senses, and as we have seen, such agreeableness has only private validity. Pleasure given by the object must be grounded in something subjective because if it were grounded in something objective, namely a concept of the object, then the judgment would be a judgment of the good, but at the same time, this subjective ground cannot have merely private validity. Given all this, Kant is lead to conclude that the pleasure is grounded on a free play of the faculties of cognition. This keeps the judgment subjective because no determinate concept is being presupposed, while at the same time allowing for the universal communicability of the representation of the object being judged because each of us have the same faculties of cognition and it are these faculties of cognition that engage in free play. Pleasure comes about as a consequence of this free play.

Specifically, the faculties that enter into this free play (or harmony of the faculties) are imagination and understanding. When we are applying concepts to things the imagination is constrained by the understanding. These constraints fall away when the faculties are in free play, and the imagination engages and toys with the placement of concepts to the object presented to the senses, but no particular concept is ever actually applied. So, while the imagination is not under the thumb of the understanding when the subject is observing a beautiful object, it has not gone rogue. The imagination still conforms to general constraints.

Kant does not elucidate this idea of free play through an example, but we can develop a crude picture of what Kant is asserting about free play if we examine our experience of appreciating an abstract work of art. We pull parts of the painting together, find representations in the shapes, or draw meaning from the colors, but because it is an abstract work, we can never subsume the art under a specific category. We add and take away concepts, but we never settle on a particular one. While this example can only hope to give us a crude depiction of free play, we can look to it as a guide when trying to understand what it means for the imagination to be free from the constraints of the understanding without it violating the general formula that the understanding has set for it.

Towards the end of the second moment, Kant briefly discusses a phenomenological argument which helps demonstrate the universality of judgments of the

beautiful. (KU 5: 218) If I find something to be beautiful, I expect, perhaps even demand, that everyone else also find it beautiful. On the other hand, if I find something to be agreeable I do not demand or even expect everyone else to also find it agreeable. Although Kant does mention that we expect everyone to feel the same pleasure when encountering something beautiful, the details about the necessity of judgments of the beautiful are not brought out until the fourth moment.

Third Moment

From the first and second moment we learned that when we find something to be beautiful, we are experiencing it disinterestedly and that the pleasure we take in experiencing something beautiful is based in the subject and is at the same time universal. In the third moment, which concerns *relation*, the purposiveness of things being judged and the two different kinds of beauty are discussed.

In the first section of this moment Kant addresses the question of whether judgments of taste have a concept that they are aimed at. That is, do they have a purpose? We think of things as being an end when we consider them as effects. Take a wristwatch for instance. When we see a watch we cannot help but recognize it as an end. We see it as being the effect of the watchmaker designing and creating a wristwatch. Furthermore, we recognize the watch as being for something, for keeping and telling time. Kant identifies that when we come across beautiful

things we experience them in a similar way.

Using a work of art to explain this point can cause things to become a bit muddled. Let us for a moment turn our attention toward a beautiful sunset. When we experience a sunset as beautiful we are, if Kant is correct, approaching it disinterestedly and expect everyone else to also experience it as beautiful, but there is still something more. The sunset seems to have been created in a way similar to the how a watch is created. We experience it as if it were designed. Also, similar as to how we understand a watch to be for keeping and telling time, we experience the sunset as being for something, for bringing us pleasure. The beautiful sunset seems as if it were designed and as if it were designed for the purpose of bringing us pleasure.

However, we do not think that the sunset was actually designed – that it is the product of a creator. It “is called purposive merely because its possibility can only be explained and conceived by us insofar as we assume as its ground a causality in accordance with ends.” (KU 5: 220) That is, we cannot help but experience it as being created. Thus beautiful things have purposiveness without having a purpose. We do not think the sunset exists for anything, but we cannot help but experience it and explain its possibility without conceiving it as coming from a will. Kant explains this by stating that we experience beautiful things as having the *form* of purpose without actually basing its purposiveness in an end.

(KU 5: 220)

Later in the third moment, Kant splits beauty in two. Some things, argues Kant, are free beauties, and others are adherent beauties. (KU 5: 230) Adherent beauties are less pure than free beauties, but it would be a mistake to automatically associate purer with better. Kant makes it clear that such an assumption would be incorrect when he explains that two people can correctly judge something to be beautiful, but one can be making a judgment of free beauty and the other of adherent beauty. One individual may criticize the other by arguing that they have bad taste, but this would be a false criticism because both individuals are making correct judgments of taste. The only difference is that one has made the judgment from sensual perception (pure), while the other has their thoughts as the foundation for their judgment (adherent). (KU 5: 230) The word ‘pure’ here simply means that when judging something we do not have in mind what the thing should be. If we do presuppose what or how the thing should be we would then be making a judgment of adherent beauty. We can look to Kant’s examples for clarification.

Besides a botanist, no one has an idea of what a flower is supposed to be (at least let us assume this for the sake of argument). Because of this, flowers are free beauties and can be free beauties even for the botanist if she does not take a botanist’s approach to the flower when making a judgment of taste. For

an example of adherent beauty Kant gives us a list of things including man, woman, child, horse, and palace. What makes these adherent beauties is that when we make a judgment of taste about them, we bring with the judgment an idea of how the things should be. When we say “this is a beautiful church,” we have in mind the idea of how a church ought to be and that idea has weight in our judgment, similarly as to how a botanist, when they approach a flower as a botanist, brings their idea of how the flower ought to be with their judgment. The botanist example brings to our attention that there is some fluidity between free and adherent beauties. Whether one is making a pure or adherent judgment of taste rests on the perspective the subject is taking towards the object. The botanist can choose whether to apply or withhold the concept of flower when judging the flower.

Questions that should come to mind when we come across Kant’s distinction of free and adherent beauties are: how is something that is beautiful adherently different from something we judge to be good? And, do not both of these judgments involve bringing concepts to the thing being judged? Kant’s answer to this is not as clear as one might hope it to be, but from the text we learn that adherent beauties are a combination of the good with the beautiful. In fact, when Kant states that “the combination of the good... with beauty does damage to its purity” (KU 5: 230) he is describing what is going on when we make judgments of taste about

things like churches, horses, human beings, and anything else that we approach as having a way that it ought to be. We are, in a way, combining judgments of good with judgments of beauty. What keeps the judgment of adherent beauty from being a judgment of the good is that, as we saw earlier, judgments of the good are grounded on a concept, whereas judgments of adherent beauty are immediately combined with the representation of a concept. Judgments of the beautiful do not presuppose any concept. Judgments of the good, as we saw earlier, are grounded in a concept, but judgments of adherent beauty are immediately combined with the representation of a concept. Judgments of the beautiful do not presuppose any concept. (KU 5: 230)

Fourth Moment

We noticed in the second moment that the beautiful is that which is represented as something that universally brings pleasure. With the fourth moment, which concerns the *modality* of a judgment of taste, Kant clarifies that this universal assent is *necessary*. Whoever declares something to be beautiful is justified in expecting universal assent only if the ground from which the judgment is made is common to everyone. (KU §19) So Kant's project in the fourth moment is to make the argument for this commonality. Kant labels this principle "a common sense," and states that it is a subjective principle "which determines what pleases

or displeases only through feeling and not through concepts, but yet with universal validity.” (KU §19) This principle of a common sense should remind us of the free play discussed in the second moment. In fact, from what we have seen, common sense and free play seem nearly identical. However, a distinction is drawn between the two when Kant labels common sense as the *effect* of free play. (KU 5: 238)

We have good reason to presuppose this common sense because we expect others to assent to our judgments of beauty. Without a common sense the disposition we have towards a beautiful object would not be universally communicable. Therefore, it is because of the universality of a judgment of taste, which Kant explained in the second moment, that a common sense must be presupposed. Common sense is what allows us to know or feel that our faculties are in free play, and because we all share this sense, we can expect others to also be able to tell that they their cognitive faculties are in free play. Furthermore, since we all share exactly similar faculties as one another, it makes sense that we think that everyone should assent to our judgment. It is what permits us to hold up our judgment as an example to others and to make the demand that everyone ascribe to the judgment.

What is important to get from this moment, for the purposes of this chapter, is merely that Kant has in his philosophy of aesthetics an explanation and justification for the expectation that everyone agree with us when we call something

beautiful. This moment explains that judgments are valid for everyone and at all times, which is a significant addition to the claim that judgments of taste are valid for everyone, which was the claim made in the second moment.

Beauty is not objective

Thus far in this section we have examined each of the Four Moments of Taste. We needed to do this in order to have a general idea of Kant's aesthetics so we could appreciate the political philosophy Arendt develops in her Kant lectures. Before we turn to Arendt herself, it will be helpful to pull from these moments exactly what we need for the rest of the chapter. The rest of this section is dedicated to clarifying the concepts required in order to understand Arendt's Kantian political philosophy and the situatedness critique.

In the First Moment of Taste Kant explains that when deciding whether something is beautiful, we do not appeal to understanding. (KU 5:203) Rather, the beauty of something depends on our faculty of imagination and the pleasure that comes about from our experience of the work of art. This amounts to our decisions with regards to the beauty of a work of art being based in pleasure rather than cognition. Because the judgment is not cognitive, that is, not based in logic, nor conceptual in any way, it is a subjective judgment.⁵

⁵Kant's statement that judgments of beauty are subjective, does not entail that he thinks something along the lines of "beauty is in the eye of the beholder." Kant does not think this.

The reason why a judgment of taste, which is based on a feeling of pleasure or displeasure, cannot be objective is because there is nothing in the object that determines a subject's pleasure or displeasure. Objects can have properties such as shape and weight. Squareness can belong to an object, we can point to it. However, pleasure and displeasure cannot exist in objects. Pleasure and displeasure exist only in subjects. When we say that an object is pleasurable, we do not mean that pleasure exist as a part of the object, the way squareness belongs to a table. What we mean is that we feel pleasure when we experience the work.

A judgment of beauty is a disinterested judgment

We are told, by Kant, that the pleasure which determines our judgment is not interested. What Kant means is that, if a judgment is in fact a judgment of taste, the pleasure we are appealing to in making that judgment is concerned with the existence of the object itself. That is, we cannot think, "I hope this stays around for many years so others can see it." Such a thought would be interested because it concerns the existence of the object. Nothing can be at stake when we are determining the beauty of something.

A judgment of the beautiful is a universal judgment

In fact, he thinks that one can be wrong in their judgments of beauty. (KU §7)

In §6 of *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, Kant explains that the satisfaction which leads to a judgment of the beautiful, because it is disinterested, is founded on universal grounds. (KU 5:211) Since a judgment of the beautiful is not tied to any interest of the subject, the subject feels completely free in making her judgment. She finds pleasure in the object, but it has nothing to do with any interest the subject has in the object, and because of this, the experience of beauty is one that is not tied to the individual. There is nothing that justifies, so to speak, the judgment of beauty. It is not beautiful because I like this sort of thing, nor is it beautiful because it is good for something, or good insofar as it is the kind of thing that it is. Because the judgment is free, that is, not tied to any interest, the judgment of the beautiful is experienced as being the kind of thing that must be universal. Since it is not tied to anything in me in particular, the pleasure that results from experiencing the object must be able to be felt by anyone who experiences the object.

Kant thinks — in addition to his thought that the universality of the judgment of the beautiful being true merely by way of deduction from the claim that beauty is a disinterested judgment — that beauty being universal helps to explain the phenomena of us talking as if beauty were in objects. We talk as if beauty were in objects because we think that an object being beautiful has nothing to do with us as individuals. However, we have already seen that judgments

of taste are subjective, necessarily, because the judgment deals with the pleasure the subject experiences. Understanding both of these claims, that judgments of the beautiful are necessarily subjective, and that they are also universal, leads to the understanding of beauty to be a subjective universal judgment, and this is exactly Kant's position.

Kant makes it clear that universality is distinct from generality, and that things that are beautiful are beautiful universally, whereas things that are agreeable can be generally agreeable, but not universally agreeable, because judgments of the agreeable are purely subjective unlike the universally subjective judgments of the beautiful. (KU 5:213)

Generally, we all like champagne, and when someone brings very good champagne to a party, we are all pleased. But this does not mean that the champagne is beautiful, this means that it is generally agreeable. Most people like good champagne. However, if you do not like good champagne, you are not incorrect, whereas if the sunset is beautiful and you do not make that judgment, then you are wrong. This is because the judgment is universal, not merely general.

5.2 Arendt

Arendt takes Kant's disinterested approach to beauty as a model for politics. In doing so, she appeals to the impartiality of Kant's critical approach. As Arendt

explains, critique is a method of philosophy distinct from dogmatism or skepticism. Her exemplar of a critical philosopher is Socrates, who did not argue on behalf of a school of philosophy (dogmatism), nor did he try to demonstrate the impossibility of acquiring knowledge or truth, the way a skeptic might. Rather, he exposed himself to questions by anyone in the marketplace, and entertained all of the questions seriously.

Critical philosophy, then, is impartial, not because it stands over and above, but because it positions itself within the people unguarded and earnestly entertaining all conceivable positions. (KPP 42) Kant, in letters to Marcus Herz, makes it clear that critique, understood this way, is how he took himself to be conducting philosophy: “I entertain the hope that by thus viewing my judgments impartially from the standpoint of others some third view that will improve upon my previous insight may be obtainable.” (SPW 108)⁶ And again to Herz a few months later:

[The mind needs a reasonable amount of relaxations and diversions to maintain its mobility] that it may be enabled to view the object afresh from every side, and so to enlarge its point of view from the microscopic to a general outlook that it adopts in turn every conceivable standpoint, verifying the observations of each by means of all the others. (PC 73)⁷

The faculty which allows us to view our own judgments from the viewpoint of

⁶Letter written June 7, 1771. Quoted by Arendt in *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, 42.

⁷Letter written February 21, 1772. Text in square brackets is from Arendt's use of the same quote on page 42 of *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*.

other is imagination. Arendt reads the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* as being a formalization of the remarks made in these letters. In the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* Kant details the working of the faculty of imagination. (KPP 43) When we imagine the possible judgments of others, and engage in critical thinking, this does not mean that we engage in a sort of empathy in which one comes to understand what it is like to be another person. Rather, it involves a liberation from prejudices (not exchanging my prejudices for those of another) and disregarding self-interest. This, explains Arendt, is the way by which one takes up a “general standpoint.” The suggestion is that we need to *understand* other standpoints, not try to stand within them. Kant was a voracious reader of travel logs, and knew his way around both Paris and London, even though he never left Königsberg. He understood himself to be a world citizen precisely because he was a world spectator. He did not travel to Paris or London to see what it is like to be French or English, that task, if it were not feudal, would still not contribute to one’s achieving a general standpoint, since they would merely be attempting to occupy another standpoint. (KPP 43-4)

The general standpoint is a position that is outside at the same time as it is welcoming to all positions, similar to how the critical philosopher is neither a dogmatist nor skeptic, but listens earnestly to all arguments. It is from this position that one makes judgments and reflects on the affairs of humanity. The

faculty of imagination allows one to take up the position of the general spectator through enabling one to understand the positions of others without attempting to adopt those position.⁸

The extrapolation of the spectator from Kant's philosophy, and the explanation of the spectator as one who is in the position to judge the affairs of humanity constitutes, to the extent necessary for the purposes of this paper, the Kantian political philosophy Arendt draws from Kant's aesthetics.

5.3 Situatedness Critique

Kant's disinterested approach to aesthetics has faced several feminist critiques. One of the most robust critiques argues that Kant ignores *situatedness*. A. W. Eaton argues that situatedness is the position from which all feminist philosophies of art take their departure.⁹ This is the idea that all of those who engage with works of art (including those who create and those who judge), do so from a particular standpoint which reflects their social situation. One especially relevant social situation is gender, understood to be what society makes of anatomical

⁸In contrast to the spectator, the actor is not in a position to make judgments. The actor is partial, by definition, because they have a part to play, and is therefore not in the position to make judgments. In addition, the actor is concerned with fame, which makes them dependent on the spectator. Fame is determined by the onlookers, not by the actors themselves. Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, 55.

⁹Eaton, "Feminist Philosophy of Art," 874.

sexual differences among human beings.

Following this critique, Kant's disinterested approach to judging works of art has been labeled the male gaze. To take up the position of the disinterested viewer, it is argued, is to take up the position of the white male. This position can only be considered disinterested if we ignore the fact of situatedness.

The film critic Laura Mulvey wrote what is one of the most famous and influential articles about the male gaze. In "The Visual Pleasures of Narrative Cinema," *Originally published in Screen, Autumn, 1975*. Mulvey demonstrates the operation of the male gaze in film. Films, which more than often have male directors and male camera operators, organize and portray the work of art via the male gaze because we are — as literally as is possible with an artwork — seeing the film the way men see it. The camera, an extension of the camera operator's eye, captures the scene as organized by the male director.

In a later article,¹⁰ Mulvey takes her position further and argues that women, through habituation and training, adopt the male gaze. Women come to view women in films as men typically do, as sexual objects for the pleasure of heterosexual males. If we continue with this extension of the male gaze to women viewers, we can also understand it to be adopted by women artists, who, when creating the work of art, adopt the position of the male artist and portray women

¹⁰Mulvey, "Afterthoughts on 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' inspired by *Duel in the Sun*" reprinted from *Framework*, Summer, 1981.

as sexual objects. If this is the case, then even works of art created by those other than white men and viewed by those other than white men, are not immune to the male gaze.

When we look to Kant's thesis, which recommends a disinterested approach to works of art, we can see the applicability of this feminist critique. One can argue that Kant's disinterested position is the position of the white male. To judge a work of art disinterestedly is to judge it as a white heterosexual male would judge it.

The worry, when we turn to Arendt's Kantian political philosophy, is that the position from which we are supposed to impartially judge the affairs of humanity, the position of the general spectator, is nothing more than the position of the white male. I suggest that Arendt deviates from Kant's aesthetics in such a way that the position of the general spectator cannot be reduced to the male gaze and is not subject to the argument from situatedness.

Kant argued that judgments of the beautiful were universal judgments, and he contrasted this with general judgments. As discussed earlier in this chapter, judgments that are universal are distinct from general judgments in that universal judgments are those that are expected of everyone, not those judgments that most people merely happen to make. One is expected to assent to a judgment of the beautiful, and we are able to disagree about what is beautiful precisely because

we think that there is a correct answer, even if we cannot appeal to reason when adjudicating this disagreement. Judgments of the beautiful are universal because they are derived from the pleasure we experience when observing a work of art, or something in nature, and this pleasure is expected of all of us because we all share the same faculties which engage in a particular way in order to bring about this pleasure. To appropriately make such a judgment we must abstract ourselves from any interests we might have in the work. However, as the feminist critique points out, abstracting oneself away from any interests in the art often means taking up the position of the white male, and any truly abstract position is impossible if, as Kant seems to suggest, a disinterested approach requires one to abandon their *situation*.

Arendt's political philosophy, modeled after Kant's aesthetics, deviates from Kant insofar as she argues for a general spectator and not a universal spectator. The general spectator does not try to stand over and above their situatedness. Rather, the spectator entertains the situations of others in an attempt to understand that situation, and only after earnestly considering these positions are they in a position to make a judgment. Kant, when explaining how one ought to go about making a judgment of the beautiful, argued that we cannot arrive at the correct judgment by way of a sort of survey, through which we gather the opinions and positions of others. This, as he suggests, would only lead to

a general judgment. What the aesthetician ought to do, according to Kant, is abstract themselves from all interests and attend only to the pleasure brought on by the art. The general spectator, on the other hand, does engage in a sort of survey, through which they come away with an understanding of the various positions. We could say they take an extra-interested approach, entertaining not only their own interests, but all of the interests they can imagine. Insofar as the feminist critique against Kant hinges on his appeal to universal disinterestedness, this critique cannot be carried over to the political philosophy Arendt models after Kant's aesthetics, because Arendt argues for a general position from which to make judgments, not a universal position.

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